



COLLECTED POEMS

1909-1962



*By T. S. Eliot*

*verse*

COLLECTED POEMS 1909-1935

FOUR QUARTETS

THE COMPLETE POEMS AND PLAYS 1909-1950

THE CULTIVATION OF CHRISTMAS TREES

COLLECTED POEMS 1909-1962

*selected verse*

THE WASTE LAND AND OTHER POEMS

*children's verse*

OLD POSSUM'S BOOK OF PRACTICAL CATS

*plays*

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

THE FAMILY REUNION

THE COCKTAIL PARTY

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK

THE ELDER STATESMAN

*literary criticism*

THE SACRED WOOD

SELECTED ESSAYS

THE USE OF POETRY AND THE USE OF CRITICISM

ESSAYS ON ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

ON POETRY AND POETS

*social criticism*

THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

NOTES TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE

CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE

*translation*

ANABASIS a poem by St-John Perse



# T. S. Eliot

COLLECTED POEMS

1909—1962

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# CONTENTS

## 1 PRUFROCK—1917

- ~~3~~ 3 *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*
- ~~8~~ 8 *Portrait of a Lady*
- ~~13~~ 13 *Preludes*
- ~~16~~ 16 *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*
- 19 *Morning at the Window*
- 20 *The Boston Evening Transcript*
- 21 *Aunt Helen*
- 22 *Cousin Nancy*
- 23 *Mr Apollinax*
- 24 *Hysteria*
- 25 *Conversation Galante*
- 26 *La Figlia che Piange*

## 27 POEMS—1920

- 29 *Gerontion*
- 32 *Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar*
- 34 *Sweeney Erect*
- 36 *A Cooking Egg*
- 38 *Le Directeur*
- 39 *Mélange Adultère de Tout*
- 40 *Lune de Miel*
- ~~41~~ 41 *The Hippopotamus*

- 43 *Dans le Restaurant*  
45 *Whispers of Immortality*  
47 *Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service*  
49 *Sweeney Among the Nightingales*

51 THE WASTE LAND—1922

- 53 *I. The Burial of the Dead*  
56 *II. A Game of Chess*  
60 *III. The Fire Sermon*  
65 *IV. Death by Water*  
66 *V. What the Thunder Said*  
70 NOTES ON 'The Waste Land'

77 THE HOLLOW MEN—1925

83 ASH-WEDNESDAY—1930

- 85 *I. Because I do not hope to turn again*  
87 *II. Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree*  
89 *III. At the first turning of the second stair*  
90 *IV. Who walked between the violet and the violet*  
92 *V. If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent*  
94 *VI. Although I do not hope to turn again*

97    ARIEL POEMS

- 99    *Journey of the Magi*—1927  
101   *A Song for Simeon*—1928  
103   *Animula*—1929  
105   *Marina*—1930  
107   *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees*—1954

109   UNFINISHED POEMS

- 111   *Sweeney Agonistes*  
111        FRAGMENT OF A PROLOGUE  
118        FRAGMENT OF AN AGON  
125   *Coriolan*  
125        I. TRIUMPHAL MARCH—1931  
127        II. DIFFICULTIES OF A STATESMAN

131   MINOR POEMS

- 133   *Eyes that last I saw in tears*  
134   *The wind sprang up at four o'clock*  
135   *Five-finger exercises*  
135        I. LINES TO A PERSIAN CAT  
135        II. LINES TO A YORKSHIRE TERRIER  
136        III. LINES TO A DUCK IN THE PARK  
136        IV. LINES TO RALPH HODGSON ESQRE.

137 V. LINES FOR CUSCUSCARAWAY AND MIRZA  
MURAD ALI BEG

138 *Landscapes*

138 I NEW HAMPSHIRE

139 II. VIRGINIA

140 III. USK

141 IV. RANNOCH, BY GLENCOE

142 V CAPE ANN

143 *Lines for an Old Man*

145 CHORUSES FROM 'THE ROCK'—1934

147 I. *The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven*

152 II *Thus your fathers were made*

155 III. *The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying*

158 IV. *There are those who would build the Temple*

159 V. *O Lord, deliver me from the man of excellent intention and impure heart*

160 VI. *It is hard for those who have never known persecution*

162 VII. *In the beginning GOD created the world*

165 VIII. *O Father we welcome your words*

167 IX. *Son of Man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears*

169 X. *You have seen the house built, you have seen it adorned*

173    FOUR QUARTETS

175    *Burnt Norton—1935*

182    *East Coker—1940*

191    *The Dry Salvages—1941*

200    *Little Gidding—1942*

211    OCCASIONAL VERSES

213    *Defense of the Islands*

215    *A Note on War Poetry*

217    *To the Indians Who Died in Africa*

219    *To Walter de la Mare*

221    *A Dedication to My Wife*



PRUFROCK  
*and Other Observations*

I 9 I 7

For Jean Verdenal, 1889–1915  
mort aux Dardanelles

*Or puoi la quantitate  
comprender dell'amor ch'a te mi scalda,  
quando dismento nostra vanitate,  
trattando l'ombre come cosa calda.*



## *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

*S'io credessi che mia risposta fosse  
a persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
questa fiamma staria senza più scosse.  
Ma per ciò che giammai di questo fondo  
non tornò vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,  
senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.*

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherised upon a table;  
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . .  
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'  
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,  
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time  
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street  
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes,  
There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands  
That lift and drop a question on your plate;  
Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder, 'Do I dare?' and, 'Do I dare?'  
Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—  
(They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!')  
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,  
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—  
(They will say: 'But how his arms and legs are thin!')  
Do I dare  
Disturb the universe?  
In a minute there is time  
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all—  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons,

I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.

So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—  
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,  
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—  
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare  
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)  
Is it perfume from a dress  
That makes me so digress?  
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
And should I then presume?  
And how should I begin?

. . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets  
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes  
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!  
Smoothed by long fingers,  
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,  
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.  
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,

Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?  
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,  
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in  
upon a platter,  
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;  
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,  
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,  
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,  
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,  
Would it have been worth while,  
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,  
To have squeezed the universe into a ball  
/ To roll it towards some overwhelming question,  
To say: 'I am Lazarus, come from the dead,  
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all'—  
If one, settling a pillow by her head,  
Should say: 'That is not what I meant at all.  
That is not it, at all.'

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
Would it have been worth while,  
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,  
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along  
the floor—  
And this, and so much more?—  
It is impossible to say just what I mean!  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a  
screen:  
Would it have been worth while

If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,  
And turning toward the window, should say:

‘That is not it at all,

That is not what I meant, at all.’

. . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,  
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,  
Deferential, glad to be of use,  
Politic, cautious, and meticulous; ~~and~~  
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—  
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves

Combing the white hair of the waves blown back

When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea

By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown

Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

## *Portrait of a Lady*

*Thou hast committed—  
Fornication but that was in another country,  
And besides, the wench is dead*  
The Jew of Malta.

### I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon  
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—  
With 'I have saved this afternoon for you';  
And four wax candles in the darkened room,  
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,  
'An atmosphere of Juliet's tomb  
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.  
We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole  
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.  
'So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul  
Should be resurrected only among friends  
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom  
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room.'  
—And so the conversation slips  
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets  
Through attenuated tones of violins  
Mingled with remote cornets  
And begins.  
'You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends,  
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find  
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends,  
(For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? you are not blind!  
How keen you are!)  
To find a friend who has these qualities,

Who has, and gives  
Those qualities upon which friendship lives.  
How much it means that I say this to you—  
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar*!

Among the windings of the violins  
And the ariettes  
Of cracked cornets  
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins  
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,  
Capricious monotone  
That is at least one definite 'false note.'  
—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,  
Admire the monuments,  
Discuss the late events,  
Correct our watches by the public clocks.  
Then sit for half an hour and drink our books.

## II

Now that lilacs are in bloom  
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room  
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.  
'Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know  
What life is, you who hold it in your hands';  
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)  
'You let it flow from you, you let it flow,  
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse  
And smiles at situations which it cannot see.'  
I smile, of course,  
And go on drinking tea.

'Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall  
My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,  
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world  
To be wonderful and youthful, after all.'

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune  
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:  
'I am always sure that you understand  
My feelings, always sure that you feel,  
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.

You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.  
You will go on, and when you have prevailed  
You can say at this point many a one has failed.  
But what have I, but what have I, my friend,  
To give you, what can you receive from me?  
Only the friendship and the sympathy  
Of one about to reach her journey's end.

I shall sit here, serving tea to friends. . . .'

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends  
For what she has said to me?  
You will see me any morning in the park  
Reading the comics and the sporting page.  
Particularly I remark  
An English countess goes upon the stage.  
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,  
Another bank defaulter has confessed.  
I keep my countenance,  
I remain self-possessed  
Except when a street-piano, mechanical and tired

Reiterates some worn-out common song  
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden  
Recalling things that other people have desired.  
Are these ideas right or wrong?

### III

The October night comes down; returning as before  
Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease  
I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door  
And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.  
'And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?  
But that's a useless question.  
You hardly know when you are coming back,  
You will find so much to learn.'  
My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac.

'Perhaps you can write to me.'  
My self-possession flares up for a second;  
*This* is as I had reckoned.  
'I have been wondering frequently of late  
(But our beginnings never know our ends!)  
Why we have not developed into friends.'  
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark  
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.  
My self-possession gutters, we are really in the dark.

'For everybody said so, all our friends,  
They all were sure our feelings would relate  
So closely! I myself can hardly understand.  
We must leave it now to fate.  
You will write, at any rate.

Perhaps it is not too late.  
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends.'

And I must borrow every changing shape  
To find expression . . . dance, dance  
Like a dancing bear,  
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape.  
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance—

Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,  
Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose;  
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand  
With the smoke coming down above the housetops;  
Doubtful, for a while  
Not knowing what to feel or if I understand  
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .  
Would she not have the advantage, after all?  
This music is successful with a 'dying fall'  
Now that we talk of dying—  
And should I have the right to smile?

## *Preludes*

### I

The winter evening settles down  
With smell of steaks in passageways.  
Six o'clock.  
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.  
And now a gusty shower wraps  
The grimy scraps  
Of withered leaves about your feet  
And newspapers from vacant lots;  
The showers beat  
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,  
And at the corner of the street  
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.

And then the lighting of the lamps.

### II

The morning comes to consciousness  
Of faint stale smells of beer  
From the sawdust-trampled street  
With all its muddy feet that press  
To early coffee-stands.

With the other masquerades  
That time resumes,  
One thinks of all the hands  
That are raising dingy shades  
In a thousand furnished rooms.

### III

You tossed a blanket from the bed,  
You lay upon your back, and waited,  
You dozed, and watched the night revealing  
The thousand sordid images  
Of which your soul was constituted;  
They flickered against the ceiling.  
And when all the world came back  
And the light crept up between the shutters  
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,  
You had such a vision of the street  
As the street hardly understands,  
Sitting along the bed's edge, where  
You curled the papers from your hair,  
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet  
In the palms of both soiled hands.

### IV

His soul stretched tight across the skies  
That fade behind a city block,  
Or trampled by insistent feet  
At four and five and six o'clock;  
And short square fingers stuffing pipes,  
And evening newspapers, and eyes  
Assured of certain certainties,  
The conscience of a blackened street  
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled  
Around these images, and cling:

The notion of some infinitely gentle  
Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;  
The worlds revolve like ancient women  
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

## *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*

Twelve o'clock.

Along the reaches of the street  
Held in a lunar synthesis,  
Whispering lunar incantations  
Dissolve the floors of memory  
And all its clear relations,  
Its divisions and precisions.  
Every street lamp that I pass  
Beats like a fatalistic drum,  
And through the spaces of the dark  
Midnight shakes the memory  
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,  
The street-lamp sputtered,  
The street-lamp muttered,  
The street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman  
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door  
Which opens on her like a grin.  
You see the border of her dress  
Is torn and stained with sand,  
And you see the corner of her eye  
Twists like a crooked pin.'

The memory throws up high and dry  
A crowd of twisted things;  
A twisted branch upon the beach  
Eaten smooth, and polished  
As if the world gave up  
The secret of its skeleton,

Stiff and white.

A broken spring in a factory yard,  
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left  
Hard and curled and ready to snap.

Half-past two,  
The street-lamp said,  
'Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,  
Slips out its tongue  
And devours a morsel of rancid butter.'  
So the hand of the child, automatic,  
Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the quay.  
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.  
I have seen eyes in the street  
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,  
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,  
An old crab with barnacles on his back,  
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,  
The lamp sputtered,  
The lamp muttered in the dark.  
The lamp hummed:  
'Regard the moon,  
*La lune ne garde aucune rancune,*  
She winks a feeble eye,  
She smiles into corners.  
She smooths the hair of the grass.  
The moon has lost her memory.  
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,  
Her hand twists a paper rose,

That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,  
She is alone  
With all the old nocturnal smells  
That cross and cross across her brain.'  
The reminiscence comes  
Of sunless dry geraniums  
And dust in crevices,  
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,  
And female smells in shuttered rooms,  
And cigarettes in corridors  
And cocktail smells in bars.

The lamp said,  
'Four o'clock,  
Here is the number on the door.  
Memory!  
You have the key,  
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair.  
Mount.  
The bed is open, the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,  
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.'  
  
The last twist of the knife.

## *Morning at the Window*

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,  
And along the trampled edges of the street  
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids  
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me  
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,  
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts  
An aimless smile that hovers in the air  
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

## *The Boston Evening Transcript*

The readers of the *Boston Evening Transcript*  
Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn.

When evening quickens faintly in the street,  
Wakening the appetites of life in some  
And to others bringing the *Boston Evening Transcript*,  
I mount the steps and ring the bell, turning  
Wearily, as one would turn to nod good-bye to  
    La Rochefoucauld,  
If the street were time and he at the end of the street,  
And I say, 'Cousin Harriet, here is the *Boston Evening*  
    *Transcript*.'

## *Aunt Helen*

Miss Helen Slingsby was my maiden aunt,  
And lived in a small house near a fashionable square  
Cared for by servants to the number of four.  
Now when she died there was silence in heaven  
And silence at her end of the street.  
The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped his feet—  
He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred before.  
The dogs were handsomely provided for,  
But shortly afterwards the parrot died too.  
The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantelpiece,  
And the footman sat upon the dining-table  
Holding the second housemaid on his knees—  
Who had always been so careful while her mistress lived.

## *Cousin Nancy*

Miss Nancy Ellicott  
Strode across the hills and broke them,  
Rode across the hills and broke them—  
The barren New England hills—  
Riding to hounds  
Over the cow-pasture.

Miss Nancy Ellicott smoked  
And danced all the modern dances;  
And her aunts were not quite sure how they felt about it,  
But they knew that it was modern.

Upon the glazen shelves kept watch  
Matthew and Waldo, guardians of the faith,  
The army of unalterable law.

## Mr. Apollinax

Ω τῆς λαϊνότητος Ἡράκλεις, τῆς παραδοξολοίας.  
εὐμήχανος ἄνθρωπος.

LUCIAN

When Mr. Apollinax visited the United States  
His laughter tinkled among the teacups  
I thought of Fragilion, that shy figure among the birch-trees,  
And of Priapus in the shrubbery  
Gaping at the lady in the swing.  
In the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus, at Professor Channing-Cheetah's  
He laughed like an irresponsible foetus.  
His laughter was submarine and profound  
Like the old man of the sea's  
Hidden under coral islands  
Where worried bodies of drowned men drift down in the green  
silence,  
Dropping from fingers of surf.

I looked for the head of Mr. Apollinax rolling under a chair  
Or grinning over a screen  
With seaweed in its hair.  
I heard the beat of centaur's hoofs over the hard turf  
As his dry and passionate talk devoured the afternoon.  
'He is a charming man'—'But after all what did he mean?'—  
'His pointed ears. . . . He must be unbalanced.'—  
'There was something he said that I might have challenged.'  
Of dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, and Professor and Mrs. Cheetah  
I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon.

## *Hysteria*

As she laughed I was aware of becoming involved in her laughter and being part of it, until her teeth were only accidental stars with a talent for squad-drill. I was drawn in by short gasps, inhaled at each momentary recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles. An elderly waiter with trembling hands was hurriedly spreading a pink and white checked cloth over the rusty green iron table, saying: 'If the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden, if the lady and gentleman wish to take their tea in the garden . . .'

I decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be stopped, some of the fragments of the afternoon might be collected, and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety to this end.

## *Conversation Galante*

I observe: 'Our sentimental friend the moon!  
Or possibly (fantastic, I confess)  
It may be Prester John's balloon  
Or an old battered lantern hung aloft  
To light poor travellers to their distress.'  
She then: 'How you digress!'

And I then: 'Someone frames upon the keys  
That exquisite nocturne, with which we explain  
The night and moonshine; music which we seize  
To body forth our own vacuity.'  
She then: 'Does this refer to me?'  
'Oh no, it is I who am inane.'

'You, madam, are the eternal humorist,  
The eternal enemy of the absolute,  
Giving our vagrant moods the slightest twist!  
With your air indifferent and imperious  
At a stroke our mad poetics to confute—'  
And—'Are we then so serious?'

## *La Figlia che Piange*

*O quam te memorem virgo . . .*

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—  
Lean on a garden urn—  
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—  
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—  
Fling them to the ground and turn  
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:  
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,  
So I would have had her stand and grieve,  
So he would have left  
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,  
As the mind deserts the body it has used.  
I should find  
Some way incomparably light and deft,  
Some way we both should understand,  
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather  
Compelled my imagination many days,  
Many days and many hours:  
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers.  
And I wonder how they should have been together!  
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.  
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze  
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

# P O E M S

1 9 2 0



## Gerontion

*Thou hast nor youth nor age  
But as it were an after dinner sleep  
Dreaming of both.*

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,  
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.  
I was neither at the hot gates  
Nor fought in the warm rain  
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,  
Bitten by flies, fought.  
My house is a decayed house,  
And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,  
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,  
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.  
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;  
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.  
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,  
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.  
I an old man,  
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. 'We would see a sign!'  
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,  
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year  
Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,  
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk  
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero  
With caressing hands, at Limoges  
Who walked all night in the next room;

By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;  
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room  
Shifting the candles, Fraulein von Kulp  
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door.

Vacant shuttles  
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,  
An old man in a draughty house  
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now  
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions  
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late  
What's not believed in, or is still believed,  
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon  
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with  
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think  
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices  
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues  
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes  
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at  
last  
We have not reached conclusion, when I  
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last  
I have not made this show purposelessly  
And it is not by any concitation  
Of the backward devils.

I would meet you upon this honestly.  
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom  
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.  
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it  
Since what is kept must be adulterated?  
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:  
How should I use them for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations  
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,  
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,  
With pungent sauces, multiply variety  
In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,  
Suspend its operations, will the weevil  
Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled  
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear  
In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits  
Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn.  
White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,  
And an old man driven by the Trades  
To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,  
Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

*Burbank with a Baedeker:  
Bleistein with a Cigar*

*Tra-la-la-la-la-la-laire—nil nisi divinum stabile  
est, caetera fumus—the gondola stopped, the old  
palace was there, how charming its grey and pink—  
goats and monkeys, with such hair too!—so the  
countess passed on until she came through the little  
park, where Niobe presented her with a cabnet, and  
so departed*

Burbank crossed a little bridge  
Descending at a small hotel;  
Princess Volupine arrived,  
They were together, and he fell.

Defunctive music under sea  
Passed seaward with the passing bell  
Slowly: the God Hercules  
Had left him, that had loved him well.

The horses, under the axletree  
Beat up the dawn from Istria  
With even feet Her shuttered barge  
Burned on the water all the day.

But this or such was Bleistein's way:  
A saggy bending of the knees  
And elbows, with the palms turned out,  
Chicago Semite Viennese.

A lustreless protrusive eye  
Stares from the protozoic slime

At a perspective of Canaletto.  
The smoky candle end of time

Declines. On the Rialto once.  
The rats are underneath the piles.  
The Jew is underneath the lot.  
Money in furs. The boatman smiles,

Princess Volupine extends  
A meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand  
To climb the waterstair. Lights, lights,  
She entertains Sir Ferdinand

Klein. Who clipped the lion's wings  
And flea'd his rump and pared his claws?  
Thought Burbank, meditating on  
Time's runs, and the seven laws.

## *Sweeney Erect*

*And the trees about me,  
Let them be dry and leafless, let the rocks  
Groan with continual surges, and behind me  
Make all a desolation Look, look, wenches!*

Paint me a cavernous waste shore  
Cast in the unstilled Cyclades,  
Paint me the bold anfractuous rocks  
Faced by the snarled and yelping seas.

Display me Aeolus above  
Reviewing the insurgent gales  
Which tangle Ariadne's hair  
And swell with haste the peijured sails.

Morning stirs the feet and hands  
(Nausicaa and Polypheme).  
Gesture of orang-outang  
Rises from the sheets in steam.

This withered root of knots of hair  
Slitted below and gashed with eyes,  
This oval O cropped out with teeth:  
The sickle motion from the thighs

Jackknives upward at the knees  
Then straightens out from heel to hip  
Pushing the framework of the bed  
And clawing at the pillow slip.

Sweeney addressed full length to shave  
Broadbottomed, pink from nape to base,

Knows the female temperament  
And wipes the suds around his face.

(The lengthened shadow of a man  
Is history, said Emerson  
Who had not seen the silhouette  
Of Sweeney straddled in the sun.)

Tests the razor on his leg  
Waiting until the shriek subsides.  
The epileptic on the bed  
Curves backward, clutching at her sides.

The ladies of the corridor  
Find themselves involved, disgraced,  
Call witness to their principles  
And deprecate the lack of taste

Observing that hysteria  
Might easily be misunderstood;  
Mrs Turner intimates  
It does the house no sort of good.

But Doris, towelled from the bath,  
Enters padding on broad feet,  
Bringing sal volatile  
And a glass of brandy neat.

## A Cooking Egg

*En l'an trentiesme de mon aage  
Que toutes mes hontes j'ay beues . . .*

Pipit sate upright in her chair  
Some distance from where I was sitting;  
*Views of Oxford Colleges*  
Lay on the table, with the knitting.

Daguerreotypes and silhouettes,  
Her grandfather and great great aunts,  
Supported on the mantelpiece  
*An Invitation to the Dance.*

. . . . .

I shall not want Honour in Heaven  
For I shall meet Sir Philip Sidney  
And have talk with Coriolanus  
And other heroes of that kidney.

I shall not want Capital in Heaven  
For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond.  
We two shall lie together, lapt  
In a five per cent. Exchequer Bond.

I shall not want Society in Heaven,  
Lucretia Borgia shall be my Bride;  
Her anecdotes will be more amusing  
Than Pipit's experience could provide.

I shall not want Pipit in Heaven:  
Madame Blavatsky will instruct me

In the Seven Sacred Trances,  
Piccarda de Donati will conduct me.

. . . . .

But where is the penny world I bought  
To eat with Pipit behind the screen?  
The red-eyed scavengers are creeping  
From Kentish Town and Golder's Green;

Where are the eagles and the trumpets?

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.  
Over buttered scones and crumpets  
Weeping, weeping multitudes  
Droop in a hundred A.B.C.'s.

## *Le Directeur*

Malheur à la malheureuse Tamise

Qui coule si près du Spectateur.

Le directeur

Conservateur

Du Spectateur

Empeste la brise.

Les actionnaires

Réactionnaires

Du Spectateur

Conservateur

Bras dessus bras dessous

Font des tours

A pas de loup.

Dans un égout

Une petite fille

En guenilles

Camarde

Regarde

· Le directeur

Du Spectateur

Conservateur

Et crève d'amour.

## *Mélange Adultère de Tout*

En Amérique, professeur;  
En Angleterre, journaliste,  
C'est à grands pas et en sueur  
Que vous suivrez à peine ma piste.  
En Yorkshire, conférencier;  
A Londres, un peu banquier,  
Vous me paierez bien la tête.  
C'est à Paris que je me coiffe  
Casque noir de jemenfoutiste.  
En Allemagne, philosophe  
Surexcité par Emporheben  
Au grand air de Bergsteigleben;  
J'erre toujours de-ci de-là  
A divers coups de tra là là  
De Damas jusqu' à Omaha.  
Je célébrai mon jour de fête  
Dans une oasis d'Afrique  
Vêtu d'une peau de girafe.

On montrera mon cénotaphe  
Aux côtes brûlantes de Mozambique.

## *Lune de Miel*

Ils ont vu les Pays-Bas, ils rentrent à Terre Haute;  
Mais une nuit d'été, les voici à Ravenne,  
A l'aise entre deux draps, chez deux centaines de punaises;  
La sueur aestivale, et une forte odeur de chienne.  
Ils restent sur le dos écartant les genoux  
De quatre jambes molles tout gonflées de morsures.  
On relève le drap pour mieux égratigner.  
Moins d'une heue d'ici est Saint Apollinaire  
En Classe, basilique connue des amateurs  
De chapitaux d'acanthé que tournoie le vent.

Ils vont prendre le train de huit heures  
Prolonger leurs misères de Padoue à Milan  
Où se trouvent la Cène, et un restaurant pas cher.  
Lui pense aux pourboires, et rédige son bilan.  
Ils auront vu la Suisse et traversé la France.  
Et Saint Apollinaire, raide et ascétique,  
Vieille usine désaffectée de Dieu, tient encore  
Dans ses pierres écroulantes la forme précise de Byzance.

## *The Hippopotamus*

*Similiter et omnes revereantur Diaconos, ut mandatum Jesu Christi, et Episcopum, ut Jesum Christum, existentem filium Patris, Presbyteros autem, ut concilium Dei et conjunctionem Apostolorum. Sine his Ecclesia non vocatur, de quibus suadeo vos sic habeo.*  
S IGNATII AD TRALLIANOS.

*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.*

The broad-backed hippopotamus  
Rests on his belly in the mud;  
Although he seems so firm to us  
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,  
Susceptible to nervous shock;  
While the True Church can never fail  
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err  
In compassing material ends,  
While the True Church need never stir  
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach  
The mango on the mango-tree;  
But fruits of pomegranate and peach  
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice  
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,

But every week we hear rejoice  
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day  
Is passed in sleep, at night he hunts,  
God works in a mysterious way—  
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing  
Ascending from the damp savannas,  
And quiring angels round him sing  
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean  
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,  
Among the saints he shall be seen  
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,  
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,  
While the True Church remains below  
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

## *Dans le Restaurant*

Le garçon délabré qui n'a rien à faire  
Que de se gratter les doigts et se pencher sur mon épaule:  
    'Dans mon pays il fera temps pluvieux,  
    Du vent, du grand soleil, et de la pluie;  
    C'est ce qu'on appelle le jour de lessive des gueux.'  
(Bavard, baveux, à la croupe arrondie,  
Je te prie, au moins, ne bave pas dans la soupe)  
    'Les saules trempés, et des bourgeons sur les ronces—  
    C'est là, dans une averse, qu'on s'abrite.  
J'avais sept ans, elle était plus petite.  
    Ellé était toute mouillée, je lui ai donné des primevères.'  
Les taches de son gilet montent au chiffre de trente-huit.  
    'Je la chatouillais, pour la faire rire.  
    J'éprouvais un instant de puissance et de délire.'

    Mais alors, vieux lubrique, à cet âge . . .  
'Monsieur, le fait est dur.  
    Il est venu, nous peloter, un gros chien;  
    Moi j'avais peur, je l'ai quittée à mi-chemin.  
    C'est dommage.'

    Mais alors, tu as ton vautour!  
Va t'en te décrotter les rides du visage;  
Tiens, ma fourchette, dégrasse-toi le crâne.  
De quel droit payes-tu des expériences comme moi?  
Tiens, voilà dix sous, pour la salle-de-bains.

Phlébas, le Phénicien, pendant quinze jours noyé,  
Oubliait les cris des mouettes et la houle de Cornouaille,  
Et les profits et les pertes, et la cargaison d'étain:

Un courant de sous-mer l'emporta très loin,  
Le repassant aux étapes de sa vie antérieure.  
Figurez-vous donc, c'était un sort pénible,  
Cependant, ce fut jadis un bel homme, de haute taille.

## *Whispers of Immortality*

Webster was much possessed by death  
And saw the skull beneath the skin,  
And breastless creatures under ground  
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

/

Daffodil bulbs instead of balls  
Stared from the sockets of the eyes!  
He knew that thought clings round dead limbs  
Tightening its lusts and luxuries.

Donne, I suppose, was such another  
Who found no substitute for sense,  
To seize and clutch and penetrate;  
Expert beyond experience,

He knew the anguish of the marrow  
The ache of the skeleton;  
No contact possible to flesh  
Allayed the fever of the bone.

. . . . .

Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye  
Is underlined for emphasis;  
Uncorseted, her friendly bust  
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.

The couched Brazilian jaguar  
Compels the scampering marmoset  
With subtle effluence of cat;  
Grishkin has a maisonnette;

The sleek Brazilian jaguar  
Does not in its aboreal gloom  
Distil so rank a feline smell  
As Grishkin in a drawing-room.

And even the Abstract Entities  
Circumambulate her charm,  
But our lot crawls between dry ribs  
To keep our metaphysics warm.

## *Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service*

*Look, look, master, here comes two religious caterpillars*  
The Jew of Malta.

Polyphiloprogenitive  
The sapient sutlers of the Lord  
Drift across the window-panes.  
In the beginning was the Word.

In the beginning was the Word.  
Superfetation of τὸ εἶν,  
And at the mensual turn of time  
Produced enervate Origen.

A painter of the Umbrian school  
Designed upon a gesso ground  
The nimbus of the Baptized God.  
The wilderness is cracked and browned

But through the water pale and thin  
Still shine the unoffending feet  
And there above the painter set  
The Father and the Paraclete.

. . . . .

The sable presbyters approach  
The avenue of penitence;  
The young are red and pustular  
Clutching piaculative pence.

Under the penitential gates  
Sustained by staring Seraphim

Where the souls of the devout  
Burn invisible and dim.

Along the garden-wall the bees  
With hairy bellies pass between  
The staminate and pistillate,  
Blest office of the epicene.

Sweeney shifts from ham to ham  
Stirring the water in his bath.  
The masters of the subtle schools  
Are controversial, polymath.

## *Sweeney Among the Nightingales*

*ὦμοι, πέπληγμαὶ καίριαν πλεγγὴν ἔσω.*

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees  
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,  
The zebra stripes along his jaw  
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon  
Slide westward toward the River Plate,  
Death and the Raven drift above  
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog  
Are veiled, and hushed the shrunken seas;  
The person in the Spanish cape  
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth  
Overturns a coffee-cup,  
Reorganised upon the floor  
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown  
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;  
The waiter brings in oranges  
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown  
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;  
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch  
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape  
Are suspect, thought to be in league;  
Therefore the man with heavy eyes  
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears  
Outside the window, leaning in,  
Branches of wistaria  
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct  
Converses at the door apart,  
The nightingales are singing near  
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood  
When Agamemnon cried aloud  
And let their liquid siftings fall  
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

# THE WASTE LAND

1922

‘Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere,  
et cum illi pueri dicerent. Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις, respondebat illa ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.’

For Ezra Pound  
*il miglior fabbro.*



## *I. The Burial of the Dead*

✓ April is the cruellest month, breeding

Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing

Memory and desire, stirring

Dull roots with spring rain.

Winter kept us warm, covering

Earth in forgetful snow, feeding

✓ A little life with dried tubers.

Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee

With a shower of rain, we stopped in the colonnade,

And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,

10

And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.

Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.

And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,

My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,

And I was frightened. He said, Marie,

Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.

In the mountains, there you feel free.

I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow

Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,

20

You cannot say, or guess, for you know only

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,

And the dry stone no sound of water. Only

There is shadow under this red rock,

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),

And I will show you something different from either

Your shadow at morning striding behind you

Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

30

*Frisch weht der Wind*

*Der Heimat zu*

*Mein Irisch Kind,*

*Wo weilest du?*

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;

'They called me the hyacinth girl.'

—Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not

Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,

Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

*Oed' und leer das Meer.*

40

Madame Sosostriis, famous clairvoyante,

Had a bad cold, nevertheless

Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,

With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,

Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,

(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)

Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,

The lady of situations.

50

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,

And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,

Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,

Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find

The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.

I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.

Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,

Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:

One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City,  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
I had not thought death had undone so many.  
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.  
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours  
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.  
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: 'Stetson!  
'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!  
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?  
'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?  
'O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,  
'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!  
'You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!'

60

70

## II. A Game of Chess

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Glowed on the marble, where the glass  
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines  
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out  
80 (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)  
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra  
Reflecting light upon the table as  
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,  
From satin cases poured in rich profusion.  
In vials of ivory and coloured glass  
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,  
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused  
And drowned the sense in odours, stirred by the air  
90 That freshened from the window, these ascended  
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,  
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,  
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.  
Huge sea-wood fed with copper  
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,  
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.  
Above the antique mantel was displayed  
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene  
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king  
100 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale  
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice  
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,  
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.  
And other withered stumps of time  
Were told upon the walls, staring forms  
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.

Footsteps shuffled on the stair.  
Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair  
Spread out in fiery points  
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still. 110

'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.  
'Speak to me. Why do you never speak Speak.  
'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?  
'I never know what you are thinking Think.'

I think we are in rats' alley  
Where the dead men lost their bones.

'What is that noise?'  
The wind under the door.  
'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'  
Nothing again nothing. 120  
Do

'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember  
'Nothing?'

I remember  
Those are pearls that were his eyes.  
'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'  
But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—  
It's so elegant  
So intelligent 130  
'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'  
'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street  
'With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?

‘What shall we ever do?’

The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said—

I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself, 140

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Now Albert’s coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He’ll want to know what you done with that money he gave  
you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

He said, I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.

And no more can’t I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,

And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said.

Oh is there, she said. Something o’ that, I said. 150

Then I’ll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight  
look.

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

If you don’t like it you can get on with it, I said.

Others can pick and choose if you can’t.

But if Albert makes off, it won’t be for lack of telling.

You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)

I can’t help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It’s them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.

(She’s had five already, and nearly died of young George.) 160

The chemist said it would be all right, but I’ve never been  
the same.

You *are* a proper fool, I said

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don't want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

170

Ta ta Goonight. Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night,  
good night.

### III. *The Fire Sermon*

The river's tent is broken, the last fingers of leaf  
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind  
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.  
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.  
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,  
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends  
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are  
departed.

And their friends, the loitering heirs of City directors;  
Departed, have left no addresses. 180  
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .  
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,  
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.  
But at my back in a cold blast I hear  
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation  
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank  
While I was fishing in the dull canal  
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse 190  
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck  
And on the king my father's death before him.  
White bodies naked on the low damp ground  
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,  
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.  
But at my back from time to time I hear  
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring  
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.  
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter

And on her daughter  
They wash their feet in soda water  
*Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*

200

Twit twit twit  
Jug jug jug jug jug jug  
So rudely forc'd.  
Tereu

Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter noon  
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant  
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants  
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,  
Asked me in demotic French  
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel  
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

210

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back  
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits  
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,  
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,  
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see  
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives  
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,  
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights  
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.  
Out of the window perilously spread  
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,  
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)  
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.  
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs  
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—

220

I too awaited the expected guest.  
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,  
One of the low on whom assurance sits  
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.  
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,  
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,  
Endeavours to engage her in caresses  
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.  
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once,  
Exploring hands encounter no defence;  
His vanity requires no response,  
And makes a welcome of indifference.  
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all  
Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)  
Bestows one final patronising kiss,  
And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .

230

240

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
Hardly aware of her departed lover;  
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:  
'Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over.'  
When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again, alone,  
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,  
And puts a record on the gramophone.

250

'This music crept by me upon the waters'  
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.

O City city, I can sometimes hear  
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,  
The pleasant whining of a mandoline  
And a clatter and a chatter from within  
Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls  
Of Magnus Martyr hold  
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

260

The river sweats  
Oil and tar  
The barges drift  
With the turning tide  
Red sails  
Wide  
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.  
The barges wash  
Drifting logs  
Down Greenwich reach  
Past the Isle of Dogs.  
Weialala leia  
Wallala leialala

270

Elizabeth and Leicester  
Beating oars  
The stern was formed  
A gilded shell  
Red and gold  
The brisk swell  
Rippled both shores  
Southwest wind  
Carried down stream

280

The peal of bells

White towers

Weialala leia

290

Wallala leialala

'Trams and dusty trees.

Highbury bore me Richmond and Kew

Undid me By Richmond I raised my knees

Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.'

'My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart

Under my feet. After the event

He wept. He promised "a new start."

I made no comment. What should I resent?'

'On Margate Sands.

300

I can connect

Nothing with nothing.

The broken fingernails of dirty hands.

My people humble people who expect

Nothing.'

la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning

O Lord Thou pluckest me out

O Lord Thou pluckest

310

burning

#### *IV. Death by Water*

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,  
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell  
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea  
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell  
He passed the stages of his age and youth  
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentle or Jew  
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,  
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

320

## *V. What the Thunder Said*

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces  
After the frosty silence in the gardens  
After the agony in stony places  
The shouting and the crying  
Prison and palace and reverberation  
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains  
He who was living is now dead  
We who were living are now dying  
With a little patience

330

Here is no water but only rock  
Rock and no water and the sandy road  
The road winding above among the mountains  
Which are mountains of rock without water  
If there were water we should stop and drink  
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think  
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit  
There is not even silence in the mountains  
But dry sterile thunder without rain  
There is not even solitude in the mountains  
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl  
From doors of mudcracked houses

340

If there were water

And no rock  
If there were rock  
And also water

And water

350

A spring

A pool among the rock

If there were the sound of water only

Not the cicada

And dry grass singing

But sound of water over a rock

Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees

Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop

But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?

360

When I count, there are only you and I together

But when I look ahead up the white road

There is always another one walking beside you

Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded

I do not know whether a man or a woman

—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air

Murmur of maternal lamentation

Who are those hooded hordes swarming

Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth

370

Ringed by the flat horizon only

What is the city over the mountains

Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air

Falling towers

Jerusalem Athens Alexandria

Vienna London

Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight

And fiddled whisper music on those strings  
And bats with baby faces in the violet light 380  
Whistled, and beat their wings  
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall  
And upside down in air were towers  
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours  
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells

In this decayed hole among the mountains  
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing  
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel  
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.  
It has no windows, and the door swings, 390  
Dry bones can harm no one.  
Only a cock stood on the rooftree  
Co co rico co co rico  
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust  
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves  
Waited for rain, while the black clouds  
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.  
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.  
Then spoke the thunder 400  
Da  
*Datta* what have we given?  
My friend, blood shaking my heart  
The awful daring of a moment's surrender  
Which an age of prudence can never retract  
By this, and this only, we have existed  
Which is not to be found in our obituaries

Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider  
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor  
In our empty rooms

410

DA

*Dayadhvam*: I have heard the key  
Turn in the door once and turn once only  
We think of the key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison  
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours  
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

*Damyata*: The boat responded  
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar  
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded  
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient  
To controlling hands

420

I sat upon the shore  
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order?  
London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down  
*Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina*  
*Quando fiam uti chelidon*—O swallow swallow  
*Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*  
These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.  
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

430

Shantih shantih shantih

## NOTES ON 'THE WASTE LAND'

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*; I have used especially the two volumes *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*. Anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognise in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies.

### I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Line 20. Cf. Ezekiel II, i.

23. Cf. Ecclesiastes XII, v.

31. V. *Tristan und Isolde*, I, verses 5-8.

42. Id. III, verse 24.

46. I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phœnician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the 'crowds of people', and Death by Water

is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

60. Cf. Baudelaire:

‘Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,  
‘Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.’

63. Cf. *Inferno*, III, 55-57:

‘si lunga tratta  
di gente, ch’io non avrei mai creduto  
che morte tanta n’avesse disfatta.’

64. Cf. *Inferno*, IV, 25-27:

‘Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,  
‘non avea pianto, ma’ che di sospiri,  
‘che l’aura eterna facevan tremare.’

68. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

74. Cf. the Dirge in Webster’s *White Devil*.

76. V. Baudelaire, Preface to *Fleurs du Mal*.

## II. A GAME OF CHESS

77. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, ii, l. 190.

92. Laquearia. V. *Aeneid*, I, 726:

dependent lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem  
flammis funalia vincunt.

98. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV, 140.

99. V. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VI, Philomela.

100. Cf. Part III, l. 204.

115. Cf. Part III, l. 195.

118. Cf. Webster: ‘Is the wind in that door still?’

126. Cf. Part I, l. 37, 48.

138. Cf. the game of chess in Middleton's *Women beware Women*.

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

176. V. Spenser, *Prothalamion*.

192 Cf *The Tempest*, I, ii

196. Cf. Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress*.

197. Cf. Day, *Parliament of Bees*.

‘When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear,

‘A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring

‘Actaeon to Diana in the spring,

‘Where all shall see her naked skin . . .’

199. I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.

202. V. Verlaine, *Parsifal*.

210. The currants were quoted at a price ‘cost insurance and freight to London’; and the Bill of Lading, etc., were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft.

218. Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character’, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem. The whole passage from Ovid is of great anthropological interest:

‘ . . . Cum Iunone iocos et maior vestra profecto est

Quam, quae contingit maribus’, dixisse, ‘voluptas.’

Illa negat; placuit quae sit sententia docti

Quaerere Tiresiae. venus huic erat utraque nota.  
 Nam duo magnorum viridi coeuntia silva  
 Corpora serpentum baculi violaverat ictu  
 Deque viro factus, mirabile, femina septem  
 Egerat autumnos, octavo rursus eosdem  
 Vidit et 'est vestrae si tanta potentia plagae',  
 Dixit 'ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,  
 Nunc quoque vos feriam!' percussis anguibus isdem  
 Forma prior redit genetivaeque venit imago.  
 Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa  
 Dicta Iovis firmat, gravius Saturnia rusto  
 Nec pro materia fertur doluisse suique  
 Iudicis aeterna damnavit lumina nocte,  
 At pater omnipotens (neque enim licet inrita cuiquam  
 Facta dei fecisse deo) pro lumine adempto  
 Scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore.

221. This may not appear as exact as Sappho's lines, but I had in mind the 'longshore' or 'dory' fisherman, who returns at nightfall.

253 V. Goldsmith, the song in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

257. V. *The Tempest*, as above.

264 The interior of St. Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren's interiors. See *The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches*: (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.).

266. The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here. From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn. V. *Götterdämmerung*, III, i: the Rhine-daughters.

279. V. Froude, *Elizabeth*, Vol I, ch. iv, letter of De Quadra to Philip of Spain:

'In the afternoon we were in a barge, watching the games on the river. (The queen) was alone with Lord Robert and myself on the poop, when they began to talk nonsense, and

went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the queen pleased.'

293. Cf. *Purgatorio*, V. 133:

'Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;

'Siena m'è fe', disfecemi Maremma.'

307. V. St. Augustine's *Confessions* 'to Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears.'

308. The complete text of the Buddha's Fire Sermon (which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount) from which these words are taken, will be found translated in the late Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translation* (Harvard Oriental Series). Mr. Warren was one of the great pioneers of Buddhist studies in the Occident.

309. From St. Augustine's *Confessions* again. The collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident.

#### V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

In the first part of Part V three themes are employed: the journey to Emmaus, the approach to the Chapel Perilous (see Miss Weston's book) and the present decay of eastern Europe.

357. This is *Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii*, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec Province. Chapman says (*Hand-book of Birds of Eastern North America*) 'it is most at home in secluded woodland and thickety retreats. . . . Its notes are not remarkable for variety or volume, but in purity and sweetness of tone and exquisite modulation they are unequalled.' Its 'water-dripping song' is justly celebrated.

360. The following lines were stimulated by the account of one

of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton's). it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was *one more member* than could actually be counted.

367-77. Cf. Hermann Hesse, *Blick ins Chaos*: 'Schon ist halb Europa, schon ist zumindest der halbe Osten Europas auf dem Wege zum Chaos, fährt betrunken im heiligem Wahn am Abgrund entlang und singt dazu, singt betrunken und hymnisch wie Dmitri Karamasoff sang. Ueber diese Lieder lacht der Bürger beleidigt, der Heilige und Seher hört sie mit Tränen.'

402. 'Datta, dayadhvam, damyata' (Give, sympathise, control) The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, 5, 1. A translation is found in Deussen's *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda*, p. 489.

408. Cf. Webster, *The White Devil*, V, vi:

' . . . they'll remarry

Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider  
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.'

412. Cf. *Inferno*, XXXIII, 46:

'ed io sentu chiavar l'uscio di sotto  
all'orrible torre.'

Also F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 346.

'My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it. . . . In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.'

425. V. Weston: *From Ritual to Romance*, chapter on the Fisher King.

428. V. *Purgatorio*, XXVI, 148.

“Ara vos prec per aquella valor  
“que vos condues al som de l’escalina,  
“sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor.”  
Poi s’ascose nel foco che gl’i affina.’

429. V. *Pervigilium Veneris*. Cf. Philomela in Parts II and III.

430. V. Gerard de Nerval, Sonnet *El Desdichado*.

432 V. Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*.

434 Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. ‘The Peace which passeth understanding’ is our equivalent to this word.

# THE HOLLOW MEN

1925

*Mistah Kurtz—he dead.*



# *The Hollow Men*

*A penny for the Old Guy*

## I

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us—if at all—not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men.

## II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear:  
There, the eyes are

Sunlight on a broken column  
There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

### III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are

Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone.

IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.

V

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea

And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

# ASH-WEDNESDAY

1930



# I

Because I do not hope to turn again  
Because I do not hope  
Because I do not hope to turn  
Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope  
I no longer strive to strive towards such things  
(Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?)  
Why should I mourn  
The vanished power of the usual reign?

Because I do not hope to know again  
The infirm glory of the positive hour  
Because I do not think  
Because I know I shall not know  
The one veritable transitory power  
Because I cannot drink  
There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is  
nothing again

Because I know that time is always time  
And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place  
I rejoice that things are as they are and  
I renounce the blessed face  
And renounce the voice  
Because I cannot hope to turn again  
Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something  
Upon which to rejoice

And pray to God to have mercy upon us  
And I pray that I may forget  
These matters that with myself I too much discuss  
Too much explain  
Because I do not hope to turn again  
Let these words answer  
For what is done, not to be done again  
May the judgement not be too heavy upon us

Because these wings are no longer wings to fly  
But merely vans to beat the air  
The air which is now thoroughly small and dry  
Smaller and dryer than the will  
Teach us to care and not to care  
Teach us to sit still.

Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death  
Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

## II

Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree  
In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety  
On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been,  
    contained

In the hollow round of my skull. And God said  
Shall these bones live? shall these  
Bones live? And that which had been contained  
In the bones (which were already dry) said chirping:  
Because of the goodness of this Lady  
And because of her loveliness, and because  
She honours the Virgin in meditation,  
We shine with brightness. And I who am here dissembled  
Proffer my deeds to oblivion, and my love  
To the posterity of the desert and the fruit of the gourd.  
It is this which recovers  
My guts the strings of my eyes and the indigestible portions  
Which the leopards reject. The Lady is withdrawn  
In a white gown, to contemplation, in a white gown.  
Let the whiteness of bones atone to forgetfulness.  
There is no life in them. As I am forgotten  
And would be forgotten, so I would forget  
Thus devoted, concentrated in purpose. And God said  
Prophecy to the wind, to the wind only for only  
The wind will listen. And the bones sang chirping  
With the burden of the grasshopper, saying

Lady of silences  
Calm and distressed  
Torn and most whole  
Rose of memory

Rose of forgetfulness  
Exhausted and life-giving  
Worried reposeful  
The single Rose  
Is now the Garden  
Where all loves end  
Terminate torment  
Of love unsatisfied  
The greater torment  
Of love satisfied  
End of the endless  
Journey to no end  
Conclusion of all that  
Is inconclusible  
Speech without word and  
Word of no speech  
Grace to the Mother  
For the Garden  
Where all love ends.

Under a juniper-tree the bones sang, scattered and shining  
We are glad to be scattered, we did little good to each other,  
Under a tree in the cool of the day, with the blessing of sand,  
Forgetting themselves and each other, united  
In the quiet of the desert. This is the land which ye  
Shall divide by lot. And neither division nor unity  
Matters. This is the land. We have our inheritance.

### III

At the first turning of the second stair  
I turned and saw below  
The same shape twisted on the banister  
Under the vapour in the fetid air  
Struggling with the devil of the stairs who wears  
The deceitful face of hope and of despair.

At the second turning of the second stair  
I left them twisting, turning below;  
There were no more faces and the stair was dark,  
Damp, jagged, like an old man's mouth drivelling, beyond  
    repair,  
Or the toothed gullet of an aged shark.

At the first turning of the third stair  
Was a slotted window bellied like the fig's fruit  
And beyond the hawthorn blossom and a pasture scene  
The broadbacked figure drest in blue and green  
Enchanted the maytime with an antique flute.  
Blown hair is sweet, brown hair over the mouth blown,  
Lilac and brown hair;  
Distraction, music of the flute, stops and steps of the mind  
    over the third stair,  
Fading, fading; strength beyond hope and despair  
Climbing the third stair.

Lord, I am not worthy  
Lord, I am not worthy

but speak the word only.

## IV

Who walked between the violet and the violet  
Who walked between  
The various ranks of varied green  
Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour,  
Talking of trivial things  
In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour  
Who moved among the others as they walked,  
Who then made strong the fountains and made fresh the  
springs

Made cool the dry rock and made firm the sand  
In blue of larkspur, blue of Mary's colour,  
Sovegna vos

Here are the years that walk between, bearing  
Away the fiddles and the flutes, restoring  
One who moves in the time between sleep and waking,  
wearing

White light folded, sheathed about her, folded.  
The new years walk, restoring  
Through a bright cloud of tears, the years, restoring  
With a new verse the ancient rhyme. Redeem  
The time. Redeem  
The unread vision in the higher dream  
While jewelled unicorns draw by the gilded hearse.

The silent sister veiled in white and blue  
Between the yews, behind the garden god,

Whose flute is breathless, bent her head and signed but  
spoke no word

But the fountain sprang up and the bird sang down  
Redeem the time, redeem the dream  
The token of the word unheard, unspoken

Till the wind shake a thousand whispers from the yew

And after this our exile

## V

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent  
If the unheard, unspoken  
Word is unspoken, unheard;  
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,  
The Word without a word, the Word within  
The world and for the world;  
And the light shone in darkness and  
Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled  
About the centre of the silent Word.

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Where shall the word be found, where will the word  
Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence  
Not on the sea or on the islands, not  
On the mainland, in the desert or the rain land,  
For those who walk in darkness  
Both in the day time and in the night time  
The right time and the right place are not here  
No place of grace for those who avoid the face  
No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and  
deny the voice

Will the veiled sister pray for  
Those who walk in darkness, who chose thee and oppose thee,  
Those who are torn on the horn between season and season,  
time and time, between  
Hour and hour, word and word, power and power, those  
who wait

In darkness? Will the veiled sister pray  
For children at the gate  
Who will not go away and cannot pray:  
Pray for those who chose and oppose

O my people, what have I done unto thee.

Will the veiled sister between the slender  
Yew trees pray for those who offend her  
And are terrified and cannot surrender  
And affirm before the world and deny between the rocks  
In the last desert between the last blue rocks  
The desert in the garden the garden in the desert  
Of drouth, spitting from the mouth the withered apple-seed.

O my people.

## VI

Although I do not hope to turn again  
Although I do not hope  
Although I do not hope to turn

Wavering between the profit and the loss  
In this brief transit where the dreams cross  
The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying  
(Bless me father) though I do not wish to wish these things  
From the wide window towards the granite shore  
The white sails still fly seaward, seaward flying  
Unbroken wings

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices  
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices  
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel  
For the bent golden-rod and the lost sea smell  
Quickens to recover  
The cry of quail and the whirling plover  
And the blind eye creates  
The empty forms between the ivory gates  
And smell renews the salt savour of the sandy earth

This is the time of tension between dying and birth  
The place of solitude where three dreams cross  
Between blue rocks  
But when the voices shaken from the yew-tree drift away  
Let the other yew be shaken and reply.

Blessèd sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of  
the garden,

Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood

Teach us to care and not to care

Teach us to sit still

Even among these rocks,

Our peace in His will

And even among these rocks

Sister, mother

And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,

Suffer me not to be separated

And let my cry come unto Thee.



# ARIEL POEMS



## *Journey of the Magi*

'A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a long journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.'  
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melting snow.  
There were times we regretted  
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.  
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,  
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,  
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation,  
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,  
And three trees on the low sky.  
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.  
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,  
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,  
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.

But there was no information, and so we continued  
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon  
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
Thus set down  
This: were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different, this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

## *A Song for Simeon*

Lord, the Roman hyacinths are blooming in bowls and  
The winter sun creeps by the snow hills;  
The stubborn season has made stand.  
My life is light, waiting for the death wind,  
Like a feather on the back of my hand.  
Dust in sunlight and memory in corners  
Wait for the wind that chills towards the dead land.

Grant us thy peace.  
I have walked many years in this city,  
Kept faith and fast, provided for the poor,  
Have given and taken honour and ease.  
There went never any rejected from my door.  
Who shall remember my house, where shall live my  
    children's children  
When the time of sorrow is come?  
They will take to the goat's path, and the fox's home,  
Fleeing from the foreign faces and the foreign swords.

Before the time of cords and scourges and lamentation  
Grant us thy peace.  
Before the stations of the mountain of desolation,  
Before the certain hour of maternal sorrow,  
Now at this birth season of decease,  
Let the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,  
Grant Israel's consolation  
To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow.

According to thy word.  
They shall praise Thee and suffer in every generation

With glory and derision,  
Light upon light, mounting the saints' stair.  
Not for me the martyrdom, the ecstasy of thought and prayer,  
Not for me the ultimate vision.  
Grant me thy peace  
(And a sword shall pierce thy heart,  
Thine also).  
I am tired with my own life and the lives of those after me,  
I am dying in my own death and the deaths of those after me.  
Let thy servant depart,  
Having seen thy salvation.

## *Animula*

'Issues from the hand of God, the simple soul'  
To a flat world of changing lights and noise,  
To light, dark, dry or damp, chilly or warm,  
Moving between the legs of tables and of chairs,  
Rising or falling, grasping at kisses and toys,  
Advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm,  
Retreating to the corner of arm and knee,  
Eager to be reassured, taking pleasure  
In the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree,  
Pleasure in the wind, the sunlight and the sea;  
Studies the sunlit pattern on the floor  
And running stags around a silver tray;  
Confounds the actual and the fanciful,  
Content with playing-cards and kings and queens,  
What the fairies do and what the servants say.  
The heavy burden of the growing soul  
Perplexes and offends more, day by day;  
Week by week, offends and perplexes more  
With the imperatives of 'is and seems'  
And may and may not, desire and control.  
The pain of living and the drug of dreams  
Curl up the small soul in the window seat  
Behind the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.  
Issues from the hand of time the simple soul  
Irresolute and selfish, misshapen, lame,  
Unable to fare forward or retreat,  
Fearing the warm reality, the offered good,  
Denying the importunity of the blood,  
Shadow of its own shadows, spectre in its own gloom,

Leaving disordered papers in a dusty room;  
Living first in the silence after the viaticum.

Pray for Guiterriez, avid of speed and power,  
For Boudin, blown to pieces,  
For this one who made a great fortune,  
And that one who went his own way.  
Pray for Floret, by the boarhound slain between the yew trees,  
Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth.

## *Marina*

*Quis hic locus, quae  
regio, quae mundi plaga?*

What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands  
What water lapping the bow  
And scent of pine and the woodthrush singing through the  
fog  
What images return  
O my daughter.

Those who sharpen the tooth of the dog, meaning  
Death  
Those who glitter with the glory of the hummingbird, meaning  
Death  
Those who sit in the sty of contentment, meaning  
Death  
Those who suffer the ecstasy of the animals, meaning  
Death

Are become unsubstantial, reduced by a wind,  
A breath of pine, and the woodsong fog  
By this grace dissolved in place

What is this face, less clear and clearer  
The pulse in the arm, less strong and stronger—  
Given or lent? more distant than stars and nearer than the eye

Whispers and small laughter between leaves and hurrying feet  
Under sleep, where all the waters meet.

Bowsprit cracked with ice and paint cracked with heat.

I made this, I have forgotten  
And remember.  
The rigging weak and the canvas rotten  
Between one June and another September.  
Made this unknowing, half conscious, unknown, my own.  
The garboard strake leaks, the seams need caulking.  
This form, this face, this life  
Living to live in a world of time beyond me, let me  
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,  
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.

What seas what shores what granite islands towards my  
timbers  
And woodthrush calling through the fog  
My daughter.

## *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees*

There are several attitudes towards Christmas,  
Some of which we may disregard:  
The social, the torpid, the patently commercial,  
The rowdy (the pubs being open till midnight),  
And the childish—which is not that of the child  
For whom the candle is a star, and the gilded angel  
Spreading its wings at the summit of the tree  
Is not only a decoration, but an angel.  
The child wonders at the Christmas Tree:  
Let him continue in the spirit of wonder  
At the Feast as an event not accepted as a pretext;  
So that the glittering rapture, the amazement  
Of the first-remembered Christmas Tree,  
So that the surprises, delight in new possessions  
(Each one with its peculiar and exciting smell),  
The expectation of the goose or turkey  
And the expected awe on its appearance,  
So that the reverence and the gaiety  
May not be forgotten in later experience,  
In the bored habituation, the fatigue, the tedium,  
The awareness of death, the consciousness of failure,  
Or in the piety of the convert  
Which may be tainted with a self-conceit  
Displeasing to God and disrespectful to the children  
(And here I remember also with gratitude  
St. Lucy, her carol, and her crown of fire):  
So that before the end, the eightieth Christmas  
(By “eightieth” meaning whichever is the last)  
The accumulated memories of annual emotion  
May be concentrated into a great joy

Which shall be also a great fear, as on the occasion  
When fear came upon every soul:  
Because the beginning shall remind us of the end  
And the first coming of the second coming.

# UNFINISHED POEMS



# Sweeney Agonistes

## Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama

Orestes: *You don't see them, you don't—but I see them.  
they are hunting me down, I must move on.*

CHOEPHOROS

*Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union,  
until it has divested itself of the love of created beings.*

ST JOHN OF THE CROSS.

## FRAGMENT OF A PROLOGUE

DUSTY. DORIS.

DUSTY: How about Pereira?

DORIS: What about Pereira?

I don't care.

DUSTY: You don't care!

Who pays the rent?

DORIS: Yes he pays the rent

DUSTY: Well some men don't and some men do

Some men don't and you know who

DORIS: You can have Pereira

DUSTY: What about Pereira?

DORIS: He's no gentleman, Pereira:

You can't trust him!

DUSTY: Well that's true.

He's no gentleman if you can't trust him

And if you can't trust him—

Then you never know what he's going to do.

DORIS: No it wouldn't do to be too nice to Pereira.

DUSTY: Now Sam's a gentleman through and through.

DORIS: I like Sam

DUSTY:                                *I like Sam*  
    Yes and Sam's a nice boy too.  
    He's a funny fellow

DORIS:                                *He is a funny fellow*  
    He's like a fellow once I knew.  
    *He* could make you laugh.

DUSTY:                                Sam can make you laugh:  
    Sam's all right

DORIS:                                But Pereira won't do.  
    We can't have Pereira

DUSTY:                                Well what you going to do?

TELEPHONE: Ting a ling ling  
    Ting a ling ling

DUSTY:                                That's Pereira

DORIS: Yes that's Pereira

DUSTY:                                Well what you going to do?

TELEPHONE: Ting a ling ling  
    Ting a ling ling

DUSTY:                                That's Pereira

DORIS: Well can't you stop that horrible noise?  
    Pick up the receiver

DUSTY:                                What'll I say!

DORIS: Say what you like: say I'm ill,  
    Say I broke my leg on the stairs  
    Say we've had a fire

DUSTY:                                Hello Hello are you there?  
    Yes this is Miss Dorrance's *flat*—  
    Oh Mr. Pereira is that you? how do you do!  
    Oh I'm *so* sorry. I *am* so sorry  
    But Doris came home with a terrible chill  
    No, just a chill  
    Oh I *think* it's only a chill

Yes indeed I hope so too—  
Well I *hope* we shan't have to call a doctor  
Doris just hates having a doctor  
She says will you ring up on Monday  
She hopes to be all right on Monday  
I say do you mind if I ring off now  
She's got her feet in mustard and water  
I said I'm giving her mustard and water  
All right, Monday you'll phone through.  
Yes I'll tell her. Good bye. Gooooood bye.  
I'm sure, that's very kind of *you*.

Ah-h-h

DORIS: Now I'm going to cut the cards for to-night.  
Oh guess what the first is

DUSTY: First is. What is?

DORIS: The King of Clubs

DUSTY: That's Pereira

DORIS: It might be Sweeney

DUSTY: It's Pereira

DORIS: It might *just* as well be Sweeney

DUSTY: Well anyway it's very queer.

DORIS: Here's the four of diamonds, what's that mean?

DUSTY (*reading*): 'A small sum of money, or a present  
Of wearing apparel, or a party'.  
That's queer too.

DORIS: Here's the three. What's that mean?

DUSTY: 'News of an absent friend'.—Pereira!

DORIS: The Queen of Hearts!—Mrs. Porter!

DUSTY: Or it might be you

DORIS: Or it might be you

We're all hearts. You can't be sure.

It just depends on what comes next.

You've got to *think* when you read the cards,  
 It's not a thing that anyone can do.  
 DUSTY: Yes I know you've a touch with the cards  
 What comes next?  
 DORIS: What comes next. It's the six.  
 DUSTY: 'A quarrel An estrangement. Separation of friends'.  
 DORIS: Here's the two of spades.  
 DUSTY: The *two of spades*!  
 THAT'S THE COFFIN!!  
 DORIS: THAT'S THE COFFIN?  
 Oh good heavens what'll I do?  
 Just before a party too!  
 DUSTY: Well it needn't be yours, it may mean a friend.  
 DORIS. No it's mine. I'm sure it's mine.  
 I dreamt of weddings all last night.  
 Yes it's mine. I know it's mine.  
 Oh good heavens what'll I do.  
 Well I'm not going to draw any more,  
 You cut for luck. You cut for luck.  
 It might break the spell. You cut for luck.  
 DUSTY: The Knave of Spades  
 DORIS: That'll be Snow  
 DUSTY: Or it might be Swarts  
 DORIS: Or it might be Snow  
 DUSTY: It's a funny thing how I draw court cards—  
 DORIS: There's a lot in the way you pick them up  
 DUSTY: There's an awful lot in the way you feel  
 DORIS: Sometimes they'll tell you nothing at all  
 DUSTY: You've got to know what you want to ask them  
 DORIS: You've got to know what you want to know  
 DUSTY: It's no use asking them too much  
 DORIS: It's no use asking more than once

DUSTY: Sometimes they're no use at all.

DORIS: I'd like to know about that coffin.

DUSTY: Well I never! What did I tell you?

Wasn't I saying I always draw court cards?

The Knave of Hearts!

*(Whistle outside of the window.)*

Well I *never*

What a coincidence! Cards are queer!

*(Whistle again)*

DORIS: Is that Sam?

DUSTY: Of course it's Sam!

DORIS: Of course, the Knave of Hearts is Sam!

DUSTY *(leaning out of the window)*: Hello Sam!

WAUCHOPE: Hello dear

How many's up there?

DUSTY: Nobody's up here

How many's down there?

WAUCHOPE: Four of us here.

Wait till I put the car round the corner

We'll be right up

DUSTY: All right, come up.

DUSTY *(to DORIS)*: Cards are queer.

DORIS: I'd like to know about that coffin.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

DORIS. DUSTY WAUCHOPE. HORSFALL.  
KLIPSTEIN. KRUMPACKER.

WAUCHOPE: Hello Doris! Hello Dusty! How do you do!

How come? how come? will you permit me—  
I think you girls both know Captain Horsfall—  
We want you to meet two friends of ours,  
American gentlemen here on business  
Meet Mr. Klipstein. Meet Mr. Krumpacker.

KLIPSTEIN: How do you do

KRUMPACKER: How do you do

KLIPSTEIN: I'm very pleased to make your acquaintance

KRUMPACKER: Extremely pleased to become acquainted

KLIPSTEIN: Sam—I should say Loot Sam Wauchope

KRUMPACKER: Of the Canadian Expeditionary Force—

KLIPSTEIN: The Loot has told us a lot about you.

KRUMPACKER: We were all in the war together

Klip and me and the Cap and Sam.

KLIPSTEIN: Yes we did our bit, as you folks say,

I'll tell the world we got the Hun on the run

KRUMPACKER: What about that poker game? eh what  
Sam?

What about that poker game in Bordeaux?

Yes Miss Dorrance you get Sam

To tell about that poker game in Bordeaux.

DUSTY: Do you know London well, Mr. Krumpacker?

KLIPSTEIN: No we never been here before

KRUMPACKER: We hit this town last night for the first time

KLIPSTEIN: And I certainly hope it won't be the last time.

DORIS: You like London, Mr Klipstein?

KRUMPACKER: Do we like London? do we like London!

Do we like London! ! Eh what Klip?

KLIPSTEIN: Say, Miss—er—uh—London's swell.

We like London fine.

KRUMPACKER: Perfectly slick.

DUSTY: Why don't you come and live here then?

KLIPSTEIN: Well, no, Miss—er—you haven't quite got it

(I'm afraid I didn't quite catch your name—

But I'm very pleased to meet you all the same)—

London's a little too gay for us

Yes I'll say a little too gay.

KRUMPACKER: Yes London's a little too gay for us

Don't think I mean anything *coarse*—

But I'm afraid we couldn't stand the pace.

What about it Klip?

KLIPSTEIN: You said it, Krum.

London's a slick place, London's a swell place,

London's a fine place to come on a visit—

KRUMPACKER: Specially when you got a real live Britisher

A guy like Sam to show you around.

Sam of course is at *home* in London,

And he's promised to show us around.

## FRAGMENT OF AN AGON

SWEENEY. WAUCHOPE. HORSFALL. KLIPSTEIN.  
KRUMPACKER. SWARTS SNOW. DORIS. DUSTY.

SWEENEY: I'll carry you off

To a cannibal isle.

DORIS: You'll be the cannibal!

SWEENEY: You'll be the missionary!

You'll be my little seven stone missionary!

I'll gobble you up. I'll be the cannibal.

DORIS: You'll carry me off? To a cannibal isle?

SWEENEY: I'll be the cannibal.

DORIS: I'll be the missionary.

I'll convert you!

SWEENEY: I'll convert *you*!

Into a stew.

A nice little, white little, missionary stew.

DORIS: You wouldn't eat me!

SWEENEY: Yes I'd eat you!

In a nice little, white little, soft little, tender little,

Juicy little, right little, missionary stew.

You see this egg

You see this egg

Well that's life on a crocodile isle.

There's no telephones

There's no gramophones

There's no motor cars

No two-seaters, no six-seaters,

No Citroen, no Rolls-Royce.

Nothing to eat but the fruit as it grows.  
Nothing to see but the palmtrees one way  
And the sea the other way,  
Nothing to hear but the sound of the surf.  
Nothing at all but three things

DORIS:                               What things?

SWEENEY: Birth, and copulation, and death.  
              That's all, that's all, that's all, that's all,  
              Birth, and copulation, and death.

DORIS: I'd be bored.

SWEENEY:                        You'd be bored.  
              Birth, and copulation, and death.

DORIS: I'd be bored.

SWEENEY.                        You'd be bored.  
              Birth, and copulation, and death.  
              That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks:  
              Birth, and copulation, and death.  
              I've been born, and once is enough.  
              You dont remember, but I remember,  
              Once is enough.

SONG BY WAUCHOPE AND HORSFALL  
SWARTS AS TAMBO. SNOW AS BONES

*Under the bamboo*  
*Bamboo bamboo*  
*Under the bamboo tree*  
*Two live as one*  
*One live as two*  
*Two live as three*  
*Under the bam*

*Under the boo  
Under the bamboo tree.*

*Where the breadfruit fall  
And the penguin call  
And the sound is the sound of the sea  
Under the bam  
Under the boo  
Under the bamboo tree*

*Where the Gauguin maids  
In the banyan shades  
Wear palmleaf drapery  
Under the bam  
Under the boo  
Under the bamboo tree.*

*Tell me in what part of the wood  
Do you want to flirt with me?  
Under the breadfruit, banyan, palmleaf  
Or under the bamboo tree?  
Any old tree will do for me  
Any old wood is just as good  
Any old isle is just my style  
Any fresh egg  
Any fresh egg  
And the sound of the coral sea.*

DORIS : I dont like eggs; I never liked eggs;  
And I dont like lfe on your crocodile isle.

SONG BY KLIPSTEIN AND KRUMPACKER  
SNOW AND SWARTS AS BEFORE

*My little island girl*  
*My little island girl*  
*I'm going to stay with you*  
*And we won't worry what to do*  
*We won't have to catch any trains*  
*And we won't go home when it rains*  
*We'll gather hibiscus flowers*  
*For it won't be minutes but hours*  
*For it won't be hours but years*

*diminuendo* { *And the morning*  
*And the evening*  
*And noontime*  
*And night*  
*Morning*  
*Evening*  
*Noontime*  
*Night*

DORIS: That's not life, that's no life  
Why I'd just as soon be dead.

SWEENEY: That's what life is. Just is

DORIS: What is?  
What's that life is?

SWEENEY: Life is death.  
I knew a man once did a girl in—

DORIS: Oh Mr. Sweeney, please don't talk,  
I cut the cards before you came  
And I drew the coffin

SWARTS: You drew the coffin?

DORIS: I drew the COFFIN very last card.  
I don't care for such conversation

s n o w : Let Mr. Sweeney continue his story.

SWEENEY: I knew a man once did a girl in

Any man has to, needs to, wants to

Well he kept her there in a bath

S W A R T S : These fellows always get pinched in the end.

What about them bones on Epsom Heath?

I seen that in the papers

You seen it in the papers

They *dont* all get pinched in the end.

s n o w : Let Mr. Sweeney continue his story.

SWEENEY: This one didn't get pinched in the end

But that's another story too.

This went on for a couple of months

Nobody came

And nobody went

But he took in the milk and he paid the rent.

SWARTS: What did he do?

All that time, what did he do?

SWEENEY: What did he do! what did he do?

That dont apply.

Talk to live men about what they do.

He used to come and see me sometimes

I'd give him a drink and cheer him up.

DORIS: Cheer him up?

DUSTY: Cheer him up?



FULL CHORUS WAUCHOPE, HORSFALL,  
KLIPSTEIN, KRUMPACKER

When you're alone in the middle of the night and you  
wake in a sweat and a hell of a fright

When you're alone in the middle of the bed and you  
wake like someone hit you in the head

You've had a cream of a nightmare dream and you've  
got the hoo-ha's coming to you.

Hoo hoo hoo

You dreamt you waked up at seven o'clock and it's foggy  
and it's damp and it's dawn and it's dark

And you wait for a knock and the turning of a lock for  
you know the hangman's waiting for you.

And perhaps you're alive

And perhaps you're dead

Hoo ha ha

Hoo ha ha

Hoo

Hoo

Hoo

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

KNOCK

## *Coriolan*

### *I. TRIUMPHAL MARCH*

Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels  
Over the paving.

And the flags. And the trumpets. And so many eagles.  
How many? Count them. And such a press of people.  
We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City.  
This is the way to the temple, and we so many crowding the  
way.

So many waiting, how many waiting? what did it matter, on  
such a day?

Are they coming? No, not yet. You can see some eagles.  
And hear the trumpets.

Here they come. Is he coming?  
The natural wakeful life of our Ego is a perceiving.  
We can wait with our stools and our sausages.  
What comes first? Can you see? Tell us. It is

5,800,000 rifles and carbines,  
102,000 machine guns,  
28,000 trench mortars,  
53,000 field and heavy guns,  
I cannot tell how many projectiles, mines and fuses,  
13,000 aeroplanes,  
24,000 aeroplane engines,  
50,000 ammunition waggons,  
now 55,000 army waggons,  
11,000 field kitchens,  
1,150 field bakeries.

What a time that took. Will it be he now? No,  
Those are the golf club Captains, these the Scouts,  
And now the *société gymnastique de Poissy*  
And now come the Mayor and the Liverymen. Look  
There he is now, look:  
There is no interrogation in his eyes  
Or in the hands, quiet over the horse's neck,  
And the eyes watchful, waiting, perceiving, indifferent.  
O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in the turtle's breast,  
Under the palmtree at noon, under the running water  
At the still point of the turning world. O hidden.

Now they go up to the temple. Then the sacrifice.  
Now come the virgins bearing urns, urns containing  
Dust  
Dust  
Dust of dust, and now  
Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels  
Over the paving.

That is all we could see. But how many eagles! and how  
many trumpets!  
(And Easter Day, we didn't get to the country,  
So we took young Cyril to church. And they rang a bell  
And he said right out loud, *crumpets*.)  
Don't throw away that sausage,  
It'll come in handy. He's artful. Please, will you  
Give us a light?  
Light  
Light  
*Et les soldats faisaient la haie? ILS LA FAISAIENT.*

## II. DIFFICULTIES OF A STATESMAN

CRY what shall I cry?

All flesh is grass· comprehending

The Companions of the Bath, the Knights of the British

Empire, the Cavaliers,

O Cavaliers! of the Legion of Honour,

The Order of the Black Eagle (1st and 2nd class),

And the Order of the Rising Sun.

Cry cry what shall I cry?

The first thing to do is to form the committees:

The consultative councils, the standing committees, select  
committees and sub-committees.

One secretary will do for several committees.

What shall I cry?

Arthur Edward Cyril Parker is appointed telephone operator

At a salary of one pound ten a week rising by annual incre-  
ments of five shillings

To two pounds ten a week, with a bonus of thirty shillings  
at Christmas

And one week's leave a year.

A committee has been appointed to nominate a commission  
of engineers

To consider the Water Supply.

A commission is appointed

For Public Works, chiefly the question of rebuilding the  
fortifications.

A commission is appointed

To confer with a Volscian commission

About perpetual peace: the fletchers and javelin-makers  
and smiths

Have appointed a joint committee to protest against the  
     reduction of orders.  
 Meanwhile the guards shake dice on the marches  
 And the frogs (O Mantuan) croak in the marshes.  
 Fireflies flare aganst the faint sheet lightning  
 What shall I cry?  
 Mother mother  
 Here is the row of family portraits, dingy busts, all looking  
     remarkably Roman,  
 Remarkably like each other, lit up successively by the flare  
 Of a sweaty torchbearer, yawning.  
 O hidden under the. . . Hidden under the. . . Where the  
     dove's foot rested and locked for a moment,  
 A still moment, repose of noon, set under the upper branches  
     of noon's widest tree  
 Under the breast feather stirred by the small wind after noon  
 There the cyclamen spreads its wings, there the clematis  
     droops over the lintel  
 O mother (not among these busts, all correctly inscribed)  
 I a tired head among these heads  
 Necks strong to bear them  
 Noses strong to break the wind  
 Mother  
 May we not be some time, almost now, together,  
 If the mactations, immolations, oblations, impetrations,  
 Are now observed  
 May we not be  
 O hidden  
 Hidden in the stillness of noon, in the silent croaking night.  
 Come with the sweep of the little bat's wing, with the small  
     flare of the firefly or lightning bug,

'Rising and falling, crowned with dust', the small creatures,  
The small creatures chirp thinly through the dust, through  
the night.

O mother

What shall I cry?

We demand a committee, a representative committee, a  
committee of investigation

RESIGN      RESIGN      RESIGN



# MINOR POEMS



*Eyes that last I saw in tears*

Eyes that last I saw in tears  
Through division  
Here in death's dream kingdom  
The golden vision reappears  
I see the eyes but not the tears  
This is my affliction

This is my affliction  
Eyes I shall not see again  
Eyes of decision  
Eyes I shall not see unless  
At the door of death's other kingdom  
Where, as in this,  
The eyes outlast a little while  
A little while outlast the tears  
And hold us in derision.

*The wind sprang up at four o'clock*

The wind sprang up at four o'clock  
The wind sprang up and broke the bells  
Swinging between life and death  
Here, in death's dream kingdom  
The waking echo of confusing strife  
Is it a dream or something else  
When the surface of the blackened river  
Is a face that sweats with tears?  
I saw across the blackened river  
The camp fire shake with alien spears.  
Here, across death's other river  
The Tartar horsemen shake their spears.

## *Five-finger exercises*

### *I. LINES TO A PERSIAN CAT*

The songsters of the air repair  
To the green fields of Russell Square.  
Beneath the trees there is no ease  
For the dull brain, the sharp desires  
And the quick eyes of Woolly Bear.  
There is no relief but in grief.  
O when will the creaking heart cease?  
When will the broken chair give ease?  
Why will the summer day delay?  
*When* will Time flow away?

### *II. LINES TO A YORKSHIRE TERRIER*

In a brown field stood a tree  
And the tree was crookt and dry.  
In a black sky, from a green cloud  
Natural forces shriek'd aloud,  
Screamed, rattled, muttered endlessly.  
Little dog was safe and warm  
Under a cretonne eiderdown,  
Yet the field was cracked and brown  
And the tree was cramped and dry.  
Pollicle dogs and cats all must  
Jellicle cats and dogs all must  
Like undertakers, come to dust.  
Here a little dog I pause  
Heaving up my prior paws,  
Pause, and sleep endlessly.

### III. LINES TO A DUCK IN THE PARK

The long light shakes across the lake,  
The forces of the morning quake,  
The dawn is slant across the lawn,  
Here is no eft or mortal snake  
But only sluggish duck and drake.  
I have seen the morning shine,  
I have had the Bread and Wine,  
Let the feathered mortals take  
That which is their mortal due,  
Pinching bread and finger too,  
Easier had than squirming worm;  
For I know, and so should you  
That soon the enquiring worm shall try  
Our well-preserved complacency.

### IV. LINES TO RALPH HODGSON ESQRE.

How delightful to meet Mr. Hodgson!  
                    (Everyone wants to know *him*)—  
With his musical sound  
And his Baskerville Hound  
Which, just at a word from his master  
Will follow you faster and faster  
And tear you limb from limb.  
How delightful to meet Mr. Hodgson!  
Who is worshipped by all waitresses  
(They regard him as something apart)  
While on his palate fine he presses  
The juice of the gooseberry tart.

How delightful to meet Mr. Hodgson!

(Everyone wants to know *him*).

He has 999 canaries

And round his head finches and fairies

In jubilant rapture skim.

How delightful to meet Mr. Hodgson!

(Everyone wants to meet *him*).

V. LINES FOR CUSCUSCARAWAY  
AND MIRZA MURAD ALI BEG

How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot!

With his features of clerical cut,

And his brow so grim

And his mouth so prim

And his conversation, so nicely

Restricted to What Precisely

And If and Perhaps and But.

How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot!

With a bobtail cur

In a coat of fur

And a porpentine cat

And a wopsical hat:

How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot!

(Whether his mouth be open or shut).

## *Landscapes*

### *I. NEW HAMPSHIRE*

Children's voices in the orchard  
Between the blossom- and the fruit-time:  
Golden head, crimson head,  
Between the green tip and the root.  
Black wing, brown wing, hover over;  
Twenty years and the spring is over;  
To-day grieves, to-morrow grieves,  
Cover me over, light-in-leaves;  
Golden head, black wing,  
Cling, swing,  
Spring, sing,  
Swing up into the apple-tree.

## II. VIRGINIA

Red river, red river,  
Slow flow heat is silence  
No will is still as a river  
Still Will heat move  
Only through the mocking-bird  
Heard once? Still hills  
Wait. Gates wait. Purple trees,  
White trees, wait, wait,  
Delay, decay. Living, living,  
Never moving. Ever moving  
Iron thoughts came with me  
And go with me:  
Red river, river, river.

III. USK

Do not suddenly break the branch, or  
Hope to find  
The white hart behind the white well.  
Glance aside, not for lance, do not spell  
Old enchantments. Let them sleep.  
'Gently dip, but not too deep',  
Lift your eyes  
Where the roads dip and where the roads rise  
Seek only there  
Where the grey light meets the green air  
The hermit's chapel, the pilgrim's prayer.

*IV. RANNOCH, BY GLENCOE*

Here the crow starves, here the patient stag  
Breeds for the rifle. Between the soft moor  
And the soft sky, scarcely room  
To leap or soar. Substance crumbles, in the thin air  
Moon cold or moon hot. The road winds in  
Listlessness of ancient war,  
Langour of broken steel,  
Clamour of confused wrong, apt  
In silence. Memory is strong  
Beyond the bone. Pride snapped,  
Shadow of pride is long, in the long pass  
No concurrence of bone.

V . C A P E A N N

O quick quick quick, quick hear the song-sparrow,  
Swamp-sparrow, fox-sparrow, vesper-sparrow  
At dawn and dusk. Follow the dance  
Of the goldfinch at noon. Leave to chance  
The Blackburnian warbler, the shy one. Hail  
With shrill whistle the note of the quail, the bob-white  
Dodging by bay-bush. Follow the feet  
Of the walker, the water-thrush. Follow the flight  
Of the dancing arrow, the purple martin. Greet  
In silence the bullbat. All are delectable. Sweet sweet sweet  
But resign this land at the end, resign it  
To its true owner, the tough one, the sea-gull.  
The palaver is finished.

*Lines for an Old Man*

The tiger in the tiger-pit  
Is not more irritable than I.  
The whipping tail is not more still  
Than when I smell the enemy  
Writhing in the essential blood  
Or dangling from the friendly tree.  
When I lay bare the tooth of wit  
The hissing over the archèd tongue  
Is more affectionate than hate,  
More bitter than the love of youth,  
And inaccessible by the young.  
Reflected from my golden eye  
The dullard knows that he is mad.  
Tell me if I am not glad!



CHORUSES FROM  
'THE ROCK'

1934



# I

The Eagle soars in the summit of Heaven,  
The Hunter with his dogs pursues his circuit.  
O perpetual revolution of configured stars,  
O perpetual recurrence of determined seasons,  
O world of spring and autumn, birth and dying!  
The endless cycle of idea and action,  
Endless invention, endless experiment,  
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence,  
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.  
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,  
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,  
But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.  
Where is the Life we have lost in living?  
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?  
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries  
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the Dust.

I journeyed to London, to the timekept City,  
Where the River flows, with foreign flotations.  
There I was told. we have too many churches,  
And too few chop-houses. There I was told.  
Let the vicars retire. Men do not need the Church  
In the place where they work, but where they spend their  
Sundays.  
In the City, we need no bells:  
Let them waken the suburbs.  
I journeyed to the suburbs, and there I was told:  
We toil for six days, on the seventh we must motor

To Hindhead, or Maidenhead  
If the weather is foul we stay at home and read the papers.  
In industrial districts, there I was told  
Of economic laws.  
In the pleasant countryside, there it seemed  
That the country now is only fit for picnics  
And the Church does not seem to be wanted  
In country or in suburb, and in the town  
Only for important weddings.

CHORUS LEADER.

Silence! and preserve respectful distance.  
For I perceive approaching  
The Rock. Who will perhaps answer our doubts,  
The Rock. The Watcher. The Stranger.  
He who has seen what has happened  
And who sees what is to happen  
The Witness. The Critic The Stranger  
The God-shaken, in whom is the truth inborn.

*Enter the ROCK, led by a BOY.*

THE ROCK.

The lot of man is ceaseless labour,  
Or ceaseless idleness, which is still harder,  
Or irregular labour, which is not pleasant.  
I have trodden the winepress alone, and I know  
That it is hard to be really useful, resigning  
The things that men count for happiness, seeking  
The good deeds that lead to obscurity, accepting  
With equal face those that bring ignominy,  
The applause of all or the love of none.

All men are ready to invest their money  
But most expect dividends.  
I say to you: *Make perfect your will.*  
I say. take no thought of the harvest,  
But only of proper sowing.

The world turns and the world changes,  
But one thing does not change.  
In all of my years, one thing does not change.  
However you disguise it, this thing does not change:  
The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil  
Forgetful, you neglect your shrines and churches;  
The men you are in these times deride  
What has been done of good, you find explanations  
To satisfy the rational and enlightened mind.  
Second, you neglect and belittle the desert.  
The desert is not remote in southern tropics,  
The desert is not only around the corner,  
The desert is squeezed in the tube-train next to you,  
The desert is in the heart of your brother.  
The good man is the bulder, if he build what is good.  
I will show you the things that are now being done,  
And some of the things that were long ago done,  
That you may take heart. Make perfect your will.  
Let me show you the work of the humble. Listen.

*The lights fade, in the semi-darkness the voices of*  
*WORKMEN are heard chanting.*  
*In the vacant places*  
*We will build with new bricks*  
*There are hands and machines*

*And clay for new brick  
And lime for new mortar  
Where the bricks are fallen  
We will build with new stone  
Where the beams are rotten  
We will build with new timbers  
Where the word is unspoken  
We will build with new speech  
There is work together  
A Church for all  
And a job for each  
Every man to his work.*

*Now a group of WORKMEN is silhouetted against the  
dim sky. From farther away, they are answered by voices  
of the UNEMPLOYED.*

*No man has hired us  
With pocketed hands  
And lowered faces  
We stand about in open places  
And shiver in unlit rooms.  
Only the wind moves  
Over empty fields, untilled  
Where the plough rests, at an angle  
To the furrow. In this land  
There shall be one cigarette to two men,  
To two women one half pint of bitter  
Ale. In this land  
No man has hired us.  
Our life is unwelcome, our death  
Unmentioned in 'The Times'.*

*Chant of WORKMEN again.*  
*The river flows, the seasons turn*  
*The sparrow and starling have no time to waste.*  
*If men do not build*  
*How shall they live?*  
*When the field is tilled*  
*And the wheat is bread*  
*They shall not die in a shortened bed*  
*And a narrow sheet. In this street*  
*There is no beginning, no movement, no peace and no end*  
*But noise without speech, food without taste.*  
*Without delay, without haste*  
*We would build the beginning and the end of this street.*  
*We build the meaning:*  
*A Church for all*  
*And a job for each*  
*Each man to his work.*

## II

Thus your fathers were made  
Fellow citizens of the saints, of the household of GOD, being  
built upon the foundation  
Of apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself the chief corner-  
stone.

But you, have you built well, that you now sit helpless in a  
ruined house?

Where many are born to idleness, to flittered lives and squalid  
deaths, embittered scorn in honeyless hives,

And those who would build and restore turn out the palms of  
their hands, or look in vain towards foreign lands for alms  
to be more or the urn to be filled

Your building not fitly framed together, you sit ashamed and  
wonder whether and how you may be builded together for  
a habitation of GOD in the Spirit, the Spirit which moved  
on the face of the waters like a lantern set on the back of a  
tortoise.

And some say: 'How can we love our neighbour? For love must  
be made real in act, as desire unites with desired, we have  
only our labour to give and our labour is not required

We wait on corners, with nothing to bring but the songs we can  
sing which nobody wants to hear sung;

Waiting to be flung in the end, on a heap less useful than dung'.

You, have you built well, have you forgotten the cornerstone?  
Talking of right relations of men, but not of relations of men  
to GOD.

'Our citizenship is in Heaven'; yes, but that is the model and  
type for your citizenship upon earth.

When your fathers fixed the place of GOD,  
And settled all the inconvenient saints,  
Apostles, martyrs, in a kind of Whipsnade,  
Then they could set about imperial expansion  
Accompanied by industrial development.  
Exporting iron, coal and cotton goods  
And intellectual enlightenment  
And everything, including capital  
And several versions of the Word of GOD:  
The British race assured of a mission  
Performed it, but left much at home unsure

Of all that was done in the past, you eat the fruit, either rotten  
or ripe.

And the Church must be forever building, and always decaying,  
and always being restored.

For every ill deed in the past we suffer the consequence:  
For sloth, for avarice, gluttony, neglect of the Word of GOD,  
For pride, for lechery, treachery, for every act of sin.

And of all that was done that was good, you have the inheritance.  
For good and ill deeds belong to a man alone, when he stands  
alone on the other side of death,

But here upon earth you have the reward of the good and ill  
that was done by those who have gone before you.

And all that is ill you may repair if you walk together in humble  
repentance, expiating the sins of your fathers;

And all that was good you must fight to keep with hearts as  
devoted as those of your fathers who fought to gain it.

The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying  
within and attacked from without;

For this is the law of life; and you must remember that while  
there is time of prosperity

The people will neglect the Temple, and in time of adversity  
they will decry it.

What life have you if you have not life together?  
There is no life that is not in community,  
And no community not lived in praise of GOD.  
Even the anchorite who meditates alone,  
For whom the days and nights repeat the praise of GOD,  
Prays for the Church, the Body of Christ incarnate.  
And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads,  
And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour  
Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance,  
But all dash to and fro in motor cars,  
Familiar with the roads and settled nowhere.  
Nor does the family even move about together,  
But every son would have his motor cycle,  
And daughters ride away on casual pillions.

Much to cast down, much to build, much to restore;  
Let the work not delay, time and the arm not waste;  
Let the clay be dug from the pit, let the saw cut the stone,  
Let the fire not be quenched in the forge.

### III

The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying:  
O miserable cities of designing men,  
O wretched generation of enlightened men,  
Betrayed in the mazes of your ingenuities,  
Sold by the proceeds of your proper inventions:  
I have given you hands which you turn from worship,  
I have given you speech, for endless palaver,  
I have given you my Law, and you set up commissions,  
I have given you lips, to express friendly sentiments,  
I have given you hearts, for reciprocal distrust  
I have given you power of choice, and you only alternate  
Between futile speculation and unconsidered action.  
Many are engaged in writing books and printing them,  
Many desire to see their names in print,  
Many read nothing but the race reports.  
Much is your reading, but not the Word of GOD,  
Much is your building, but not the House of GOD.  
Will you build me a house of plaster, with corrugated roofing,  
To be filled with a litter of Sunday newspapers?

#### 1ST MALE VOICE:

A Cry from the East:  
What shall be done to the shore of smoky ships?  
Will you leave my people forgetful and forgotten  
To idleness, labour, and delirious stupor?  
There shall be left the broken chimney,  
The peeled hull, a pile of rusty iron,  
In a street of scattered brick where the goat climbs,  
Where My Word is unspoken.

The people will neglect the Temple, and in time of adversity  
they will decry it.

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In a street of scattered brick where the goat climbs,  
Where My Word is unspoken.

2ND MALE VOICE.

A City from the North, from the West and from the South  
Whence thousands travel daily to the timekept City,  
Where My Word is unspoken,  
In the land of lobelias and tennis flannels  
The rabbit shall burrow and the thorn revisit,  
The nettle shall flourish on the gravel court,  
And the wind shall say: 'Here were decent godless people:  
Their only monument the asphalt road  
And a thousand lost golf balls'.

CHORUS:

We build in vain unless the LORD build with us.  
Can you keep the City that the LORD keeps not with you?  
A thousand policemen directing the traffic  
Cannot tell you why you come or where you go  
A colony of cavies or a horde of active marmots  
Build better than they that build without the LORD.  
Shall we lift up our feet among perpetual ruins?  
I have loved the beauty of Thy House, the peace of Thy sanctuary,  
I have swept the floors and garnished the altars  
Where there is no temple there shall be no homes,  
Though you have shelters and institutions,  
Precarious lodgings while the rent is paid,  
Subsiding basements where the rat breeds  
Or sanitary dwellings with numbered doors  
Or a house a little better than your neighbour's,  
When the Stranger says: 'What is the meaning of this city?  
Do you huddle close together because you love each other?'  
What will you answer? 'We all dwell together  
To make money from each other'? or 'This is a community'?

And the Stranger will depart and return to the desert.  
O my soul, be prepared for the coming of the Stranger,  
Be prepared for him who knows how to ask questions.

O weariness of men who turn from GOD  
To the grandeur of your mind and the glory of your action,  
To arts and inventions and daring enterprises,  
To schemes of human greatness thoroughly discredited,  
Binding the earth and the water to your service,  
Exploiting the seas and developing the mountains,  
Dividing the stars into common and preferred,  
Engaged in devising the perfect refrigerator,  
Engaged in working out a rational morality,  
Engaged in printing as many books as possible,  
Plotting of happiness and flinging empty bottles,  
Turning from your vacancy to fevered enthusiasm  
For nation or race or what you call humanity;  
Though you forget the way to the Temple,  
There is one who remembers the way to your door:  
Life you may evade, but Death you shall not.  
You shall not deny the Stranger.

## IV

There are those who would build the Temple,  
And those who prefer that the Temple should not be built.  
In the days of Nehemiah the Prophet  
There was no exception to the general rule.  
In Shushan the palace, in the month Nisan,  
He served the wine to the king Artaxerxes,  
And he grieved for the broken city, Jerusalem;  
And the King gave him leave to depart  
That he might rebuild the city.  
So he went, with a few, to Jerusalem,  
And there, by the dragon's well, by the dung gate,  
By the fountain gate, by the king's pool,  
Jerusalem lay waste, consumed with fire;  
No place for a beast to pass.  
There were enemies without to destroy him,  
And spies and self-seekers within,  
When he and his men laid their hands to rebuilding the wall.  
So they built as men must build  
With the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other.

## V

O Lord, deliver me from the man of excellent intention and impure heart: for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian: were doubtless men of public spirit and zeal.

Preserve me from the enemy who has something to gain: and from the friend who has something to lose.

Remembering the words of Nehemiah the Prophet: 'The trowel in hand, and the gun rather loose in the holster.'

Those who sit in a house of which the use is forgotten: are like snakes that lie on mouldering stairs, content in the sunlight.

And the others run about like dogs, full of enterprise, sniffing and barking: they say, 'This house is a nest of serpents, let us destroy it,

And have done with these abominations, the turpitudes of the Christians.' And these are not justified, nor the others.

And they write innumerable books; being too vain and distracted for silence: seeking every one after his own elevation, and dodging his emptiness.

If humility and purity be not in the heart, they are not in the home: and if they are not in the home, they are not in the City.

The man who has builded during the day would return to his hearth at nightfall: to be blessed with the gift of silence, and doze before he sleeps.

But we are encompassed with snakes and dogs: therefore some must labour, and others must hold the spears.

## VI

It is hard for those who have never known persecution,  
And who have never known a Christian,  
To believe these tales of Christian persecution.  
It is hard for those who live near a Bank  
To doubt the security of their money.  
It is hard for those who live near a Police Station  
To believe in the triumph of violence.  
Do you think that the Faith has conquered the World  
And that lions no longer need keepers?  
Do you need to be told that whatever has been, can still be?  
Do you need to be told that even such modest attain-  
ments  
As you can boast in the way of polite society  
Will hardly survive the Faith to which they owe their significance?  
Men! polish your teeth on using and retiring;  
Women! polish your fingernails:  
You polish the tooth of the dog and the talon of the cat.  
Why should men love the Church? Why should they love  
her laws?  
She tells them of Life and Death, and of all that they would forget.  
She is tender where they would be hard, and hard where  
they like to be soft.  
She tells them of Evil and Sin, and other unpleasant facts.  
They constantly try to escape  
From the darkness outside and within  
By dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be  
good.  
But the man that is will shadow  
The man that pretends to be.  
And the Son of Man was not crucified once for all,

The blood of the martyrs not shed once for all,  
The lives of the Saints not given once for all:  
But the Son of Man is crucified always  
And there shall be Martyrs and Saints  
And if blood of Martyrs is to flow on the steps  
We must first build the steps,  
And if the Temple is to be cast down  
We must first build the Temple.

## VII

In the beginning GOD created the world. Waste and void.  
Waste and void. And darkness was upon the face of  
the deep.

And when there were men, in their various ways, they struggled  
in torment towards GOD

Blindly and vainly, for man is a vain thing, and man with-  
out GOD is a seed upon the wind driven this way  
and that, and finding no place of lodgement and ger-  
mination.

They followed the light and the shadow, and the light led  
them forward to light and the shadow led them to  
darkness,

Worshipping snakes or trees, worshipping devils rather than  
nothing: crying for life beyond life, for ecstasy not of the  
flesh.

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face  
of the deep.

And the Spirit moved upon the face of the water.

And men who turned towards the light and were known of  
the light

Invented the Higher Religions; and the Higher Religions were  
good

And led men from light to light, to knowledge of Good and  
Evil.

But their light was ever surrounded and shot with darkness  
As the air of temperate seas is pierced by the still dead breath  
of the Arctic Current;

And they came to an end, a dead end stirred with a flicker  
of life,

And they came to the withered ancient look of a child that  
has died of starvation.

Prayer wheels, worship of the dead, denial of this world,  
affirmation of rites with forgotten meanings

In the restless wind-whipped sand, or the hills where the wind  
will not let the snow rest.

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face  
of the deep.

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time  
and of time,

A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history·  
transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time  
but not like a moment of time,

A moment in time but time was made through that moment:  
for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment  
of time gave the meaning.

Then it seemed as if men must proceed from light to light,  
in the light of the Word,

Through the Passion and Sacrifice saved in spite of their  
negative being,

Bestial as always before, carnal, self-seeking as always before,  
selfish and purblind as ever before,

Yet always struggling, always reaffirming, always resuming their  
march on the way that was lit by the light;

Often halting, loitering, straying, delaying, returning, yet fol-  
lowing no other way.

But it seems that something has happened that has never  
happened before: though we know not just when, or why,  
or how, or where.

Men have left GOD not for other gods, they say, but for no god;  
and this has never happened before  
That men both deny gods and worship gods, professing first  
Reason,  
And then Money, and Power, and what they call Life, or Race,  
or Dialectic.  
The Church disowned, the tower overthrown, the bells upturned,  
what have we to do  
But stand with empty hands and palms turned upwards  
In an age which advances progressively backwards?

VOICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED (*afar off*):

*In this land*

*There shall be one cigarette to two men,  
To two women one half pint of bitter  
Ale . . .*

CHORUS:

What does the world say, does the whole world stray in  
high-powered cars on a by-pass way?

VOICE OF THE UNEMPLOYED (*more faintly*):

*In this land*

*No man has hired us. . . .*

CHORUS:

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on the face  
of the deep.  
Has the Church failed mankind, or has mankind failed the  
Church?  
When the Church is no longer regarded, not even opposed, and  
men have forgotten  
All gods except Usury, Lust and Power.

## VIII

O Father we welcome your words,  
And we will take heart for the future,  
Remembering the past.

The heathen are come into thine inheritance,  
And thy temple have they defiled.

Who is this that cometh from Edom?

He has trodden the wine-press alone.

There came one who spoke of the shame of Jerusalem  
And the holy places defiled,  
Peter the Hermit, scourging with words.  
And among his hearers were a few good men,  
Many who were evil,  
And most who were neither.  
Like all men in all places,

Some went from love of glory,  
Some went who were restless and curious,  
Some were rapacious and lustful.  
Many left their bodies to the kites of Syria  
Or sea-strewn along the routes,  
Many left their souls in Syria,  
Living on, sunken in moral corruption;  
Many came back well broken,  
Diseased and beggared, finding  
A stranger at the door in possession:  
Came home cracked by the sun of the East

And the seven deadly sins in Syria.  
But our King did well at Acre.  
And in spite of all the dishonour,  
The broken standards, the broken lives,  
The broken faith in one place or another,  
There was something left that was more than the tales  
Of old men on winter evenings.  
Only the faith could have done what was good of it;  
Whole faith of a few,  
Part faith of many.  
Not avarice, lechery, treachery,  
Envy, sloth, gluttony, jealousy, pride:  
It was not these that made the Crusades,  
But these that unmade them.

Remember the faith that took men from home  
At the call of a wandering preacher.  
Our age is an age of moderate virtue  
And of moderate vice  
When men will not lay down the Cross  
Because they will never assume it.  
Yet nothing is impossible, nothing,  
To men of faith and conviction.  
Let us therefore make perfect our will.  
O GOD, help us.

## IX

Son of Man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine  
ears

And set thine heart upon all that I show thee.

Who is this that has said: the House of GOD is a House of  
Sorrow;

We must walk in black and go sadly, with longdrawn faces,  
We must go between empty walls, quavering lowly, whispering  
faintly,

Among a few flickering scattered lights?

They would put upon GOD their own sorrow, the grief they  
should feel

For their sins and faults as they go about their daily occa-  
sions.

Yet they walk in the street proudnecked, like thoroughbreds  
ready for races,

Adorning themselves, and busy in the market, the forum,

And all other secular meetings.

Thinking good of themselves, ready for any festivity,

Doing themselves very well.

Let us mourn in a private chamber, learning the way of  
penitence,

And then let us learn the joyful communion of saints.

The soul of Man must quicken to creation.

Out of the formless stone, when the artist united himself with  
stone,

Spring always new forms of life, from the soul of man that is  
joined to the soul of stone;

Out of the meaningless practical shapes of all that is living  
or lifeless

Joined with the artist's eye, new life, new form, new colour.

Out of the sea of sound the life of music,  
Out of the slimy mud of words, out of the sleet and hail of  
verbal imprecisions,

Approximate thoughts and feelings, words that have taken  
the place of thoughts and feelings,

There spring the perfect order of speech, and the beauty  
of incantation

LORD, shall we not bring these gifts to Your service?

Shall we not bring to Your service all our powers

For life, for dignity, grace and order,

And intellectual pleasures of the senses?

The LORD who created must wish us to create

And employ our creation again in His service

Which is already His service in creating.

For Man is joined spirit and body,

And therefore must serve as spirit and body.

Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;

Visible and invisible must meet in His Temple;

You must not deny the body.

Now you shall see the Temple completed:

After much striving, after many obstacles;

For the work of creation is never without travail;

The formed stone, the visible crucifix,

The dressed altar, the lifting light,

Light

Light

The visible reminder of Invisible Light.

## X

You have seen the house built, you have seen it adorned  
By one who came in the night, it is now dedicated to GOD.  
It is now a visible church, one more light set on a hill  
In a world confused and dark and disturbed by portents of  
fear.

And what shall we say of the future? Is one church all we  
can build?

Or shall the Visible Church go on to conquer the World?

The great snake lies ever half awake, at the bottom of the  
pit of the world, curled

In folds of himself until he awakens in hunger and moving  
his head to right and to left prepares for his hour to  
devour.

But the Mystery of Iniquity is a pit too deep for mortal eyes  
to plumb Come

Ye out from among those who prize the serpent's golden  
eyes,

The worshippers, self-given sacrifice of the snake. Take  
Your way and be ye separate.

Be not too curious of Good and Evil,

Seek not to count the future waves of Time;

But be ye satisfied that you have light

Enough to take your step and find your foothold.

O Light Invisible, we praise Thee!

Too bright for mortal vision.

O Greater Light, we praise Thee for the less;

The eastern light our spires touch at morning,

The light that slants upon our western doors at evening,  
The twilight over stagnant pools at batflight,  
Moon light and star light, owl and moth light,  
Glow-worm glowlight on a grassblade.  
O Light Invisible, we worship Thee!

We thank Thee for the lights that we have kindled,  
The light of altar and of sanctuary,  
Small lights of those who meditate at midnight  
And lights directed through the coloured panes of win-  
dows  
And light reflected from the polished stone,  
The gilded carven wood, the coloured fresco.  
Our gaze is submarine, our eyes look upward  
And see the light that fractures through unquiet water.  
We see the light but see not whence it comes.  
O Light Invisible, we glorify Thee!

In our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light. We are glad  
when the day ends, when the play ends, and ecstasy is  
too much pain.  
We are children quickly tired children who are up in the night  
and fall asleep as the rocket is fired, and the day is long  
for work or play  
We tire of distraction or concentration, we sleep and are glad  
to sleep,  
Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day and the night  
and the seasons.  
And we must extinguish the candle, put out the light and  
relight it;  
Forever must quench, forever relight the flame.

Therefore we thank Thee for our little light, that is dappled  
with shadow.

We thank Thee who hast moved us to building, to finding,  
to forming at the ends of our fingers and beams of our  
eyes.

And when we have built an altar to the Invisible Light, we  
may set thereon the little lights for which our bodily vision  
is made.

And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light.

O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory!



# FOUR QUARTETS



## Burnt Norton

τοῦ λόγον δ'έέντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοί  
ὥς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν

*I p 77 Fr 2.*

ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή.

*I p 89 Fr. 60*

Diels: *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Herakleitos)

### I

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable.  
What might have been is an abstraction  
Remaining a perpetual possibility  
Only in a world of speculation.  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present.  
Footfalls echo in the memory  
Down the passage which we did not take  
Towards the door we never opened  
Into the rose-garden. My words echo  
Thus, in your mind.

But to what purpose  
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves  
I do not know.

Other echoes  
Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?  
Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,  
Round the corner. Through the first gate,

Into our first world, shall we follow  
The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.  
There they were, dignified, invisible,  
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,  
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,  
And the bird called, in response to  
The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,  
And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses  
Had the look of flowers that are looked at  
There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.  
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,  
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,  
To look down into the drained pool.  
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,  
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,  
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,  
The surface glittered out of heart of light,  
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.  
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.  
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children,  
Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.  
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind  
Cannot bear very much reality.  
Time past and time future  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present.

II

Garlic and sapphires in the mud  
Clot the bedded axle-tree.

The trilling wire in the blood  
Sings below inveterate scars  
Appeasing long forgotten wars.  
The dance along the artery  
The circulation of the lymph  
Are figured in the drift of stars  
Ascend to summer in the tree  
We move above the moving tree  
In light upon the figured leaf  
And hear upon the sodden floor  
Below, the boarhound and the boar  
Pursue their pattern as before  
But reconciled among the stars.

At the still point of the turning world Neither flesh nor  
fleshless,  
Neither from nor towards, at the still point, there the dance  
is,  
But neither arrest nor movement And do not call it fixity,  
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from  
nor towards,  
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still  
point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance  
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.  
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.

The inner freedom from the practical desire,  
The release from action and suffering, release from the  
inner  
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded  
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,

*Erhebung* without motion, concentration  
Without elimination, both a new world  
And the old made explicit, understood  
In the completion of its partial ecstasy,  
The resolution of its partial horror.  
Yet the enchainment of past and future  
Woven in the weakness of the changing body,  
Protects mankind from heaven and damnation  
Which flesh cannot endure.

Time past and time future  
Allow but a little consciousness.  
To be conscious is not to be in time  
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,  
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,  
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall  
Be remembered, involved with past and future.  
Only through time time is conquered.

### III

Here is a place of disaffection  
Time before and time after  
In a dim light: neither daylight  
Investing form with lucid stillness  
Turning shadow into transient beauty  
With slow rotation suggesting permanence  
Nor darkness to purify the soul  
Emptying the sensual with deprivation  
Cleansing affection from the temporal.  
Neither plenitude nor vacancy. Only a flicker  
Over the stained time-ridden faces  
Distracted from distraction by distraction

Filled with fancies and empty of meaning  
Tumid apathy with no concentration  
Men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind  
That blows before and after time,  
Wind in and out of unwholesome lungs  
Time before and time after.  
Eructation of unhealthy souls  
Into the faded air, the torpid  
Driven on the wind that sweeps the gloomy hills of London,  
Hampstead and Clerkenwell, Campden and Putney,  
Highgate, Primrose and Ludgate. Not here  
Not here the darkness, in this twittering world.

Descend lower, descend only  
Into the world of perpetual solitude,  
World not world, but that which is not world,  
Internal darkness, deprivation  
And destitution of all property,  
Desiccation of the world of sense,  
Evacuation of the world of fancy,  
Inoperancy of the world of spirit,  
This is the one way, and the other  
Is the same, not in movement  
But abstention from movement, while the world moves  
In appetency, on its metallated ways  
Of time past and time future.

#### I V

Time and the bell have buried the day,  
The black cloud carries the sun away.  
Will the sunflower turn to us, will the clematis

Stray down, bend to us, tendril and spray  
Clutch and cling?  
Chill  
Fingers of yew be curled  
Down on us? After the kingfisher's wing  
Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still  
At the still point of the turning world.

V

Words move, music moves  
Only in time, but that which is only living  
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach  
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,  
Can words or music reach  
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still  
Moves perpetually in its stillness.  
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,  
Not that only, but the co-existence,  
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,  
And the end and the beginning were always there  
Before the beginning and after the end.  
And all is always now. Words strain,  
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices  
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,  
Always assail them. The Word in the desert  
Is most attacked by voices of temptation,  
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,  
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.

The detail of the pattern is movement,  
As in the figure of the ten stairs.  
Desire itself is movement  
Not in itself desirable,  
Love is itself unmoving,  
Only the cause and end of movement,  
Timeless, and undesiring  
Except in the aspect of time  
Caught in the form of limitation  
Between un-being and being.  
Sudden in a shaft of sunlight  
Even while the dust moves  
There rises the hidden laughter  
Of children in the foliage  
Quick now, here, now, always—  
Ridiculous the waste sad time  
Stretching before and after.

## *East Coker*

### I

In my beginning is my end In succession  
Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,  
Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place  
Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.  
Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,  
Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth  
Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,  
Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.  
Houses live and die: there is a time for building  
And a time for living and for generation  
And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane  
And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots  
And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.

In my beginning is my end. Now the light falls  
Across the open field, leaving the deep lane  
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,  
Where you lean against a bank while a van passes,  
And the deep lane insists on the direction  
Into the village, in the electric heat  
Hypnotised. In a warm haze the sultry light  
Is absorbed, not refracted, by grey stone.  
The dahlias sleep in the empty silence.  
Wait for the early owl.

In that open field  
If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,  
On a summer midnight, you can hear the music

Of the weak pipe and the little drum  
And see them dancing around the bonfire  
The association of man and woman  
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—  
A dignified and commodious sacrament.  
Two and two, necessarye conjunction,  
Holding eche other by the hand or the arm  
Whiche betokeneth concorde. Round and round the fire  
Leaping through the flames, or joined in circles,  
Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter  
Lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes,  
Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth  
Mirth of those long since under earth  
Nourishing the corn. Keeping time,  
Keeping the rhythm in their dancing  
As in their living in the living seasons  
The time of the seasons and the constellations  
The time of milking and the time of harvest  
The time of the coupling of man and woman  
And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.  
Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

Dawn points, and another day  
Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind  
Wrinkles and slides. I am here  
Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning.

What is the late November doing  
 With the disturbance of the spring  
 And creatures of the summer heat,  
 And snowdrops writhing under feet  
 And hollyhocks that aim too high  
 Red into grey and tumble down  
 Late roses filled with early snow?  
 Thunder rolled by the rolling stars  
 Simulates triumphal cars  
 Deployed in constellated wars  
 Scorpion fights against the Sun  
 Until the Sun and Moon go down  
 Comets weep and Leonids fly  
 Hunt the heavens and the plains  
 Whirled in a vortex that shall bring  
 The world to that destructive fire  
 Which burns before the ice-cap reigns.

That was a way of putting it—not very satisfactory:  
 A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,  
 Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle  
 With words and meanings The poetry does not matter  
 It was not (to start again) what one had expected.  
 What was to be the value of the long looked forward to,  
 Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity  
 And the wisdom of age? Had they deceived us,  
 Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,  
 Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit?  
 The serenity only a deliberate hebetude,

The wisdom only the knowledge of dead secrets  
Useless in the darkness into which they peered  
Or from which they turned their eyes There is, it seems to  
us,  
At best, only a limited value  
In the knowledge derived from experience.  
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,  
For the pattern is new in every moment  
And every moment is a new and shocking  
Valuation of all we have been. We are only undeceived  
Of that which, deceiving, could no longer harm.  
In the middle, not only in the middle of the way  
But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,  
On the edge of a grumpen, where is no secure foothold,  
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,  
Risking enchantment. Do not let me hear  
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,  
Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession,  
Of belonging to another, or to others, or to God.  
The only wisdom we can hope to acquire  
Is the wisdom of humility. humility is endless.

The houses are all gone under the sea.

The dancers are all gone under the hill.

### III

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,  
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,  
The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,

The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,  
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,  
Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,  
And dark the Sun and Moon, and the Almanach de Gotha  
And the Stock Exchange Gazette, the Directory of Directors,  
And cold the sense and lost the motive of action.  
And we all go with them, into the silent funeral,  
Nobody's funeral, for there is no one to bury.  
I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you  
Which shall be the darkness of God. As, in a theatre,  
The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed  
With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness  
    ness on darkness,  
And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant  
    panorama  
And the bold imposing façade are all being rolled away—  
Or as, when an underground train, in the tube, stops too  
    long between stations  
And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence  
And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen  
Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about,  
Or when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious  
    of nothing—  
I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing, wait without  
    love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing, there is yet faith  
But the faith and love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the  
    dancing.

Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.  
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,  
The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy  
Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony  
Of death and birth.

You say I am repeating  
 Something I have said before. I shall say it again.  
 Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,  
 To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,  
 You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.  
 In order to arrive at what you do not know  
 You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.  
 In order to possess what you do not possess  
 You must go by the way of dispossession.  
 In order to arrive at what you are not  
 You must go through the way in which you are not.  
 And what you do not know is the only thing you know  
 And what you own is what you do not own  
 And where you are is where you are not.

## IV

The wounded surgeon plies the steel  
That questions the distempered part,  
Beneath the bleeding hands we feel  
The sharp compassion of the healer's art  
Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.

Our only health is the disease  
If we obey the dying nurse

Whose constant care is not to please  
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,  
And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.

The whole earth is our hospital  
Endowed by the ruined millionaire,  
Wherein, if we do well, we shall  
Die of the absolute paternal care  
That will not leave us, but prevents us everywhere.

The chill ascends from feet to knees,  
The fever sings in mental wires.  
If to be warmed, then I must freeze  
And quake in frigid purgatorial fires  
Of which the flame is roses, and the smoke is briars.

The dripping blood our only drink,  
The bloody flesh our only food—  
In spite of which we like to think  
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood—  
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.

V

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—  
Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*—  
Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt  
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure  
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words  
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which

One is no longer disposed to say it And so each venture  
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate  
With shabby equipment always deteriorating  
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,  
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to  
conquer  
By strength and submission, has already been discovered  
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot  
hope  
To emulate—but there is no competition—  
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost  
And found and lost again and again: and now, under condi-  
tions  
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.  
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

Home is where one starts from. As we grow older  
The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated  
Of dead and living. Not the intense moment  
Isolated, with no before and after,  
But a lifetime burning in every moment  
And not the lifetime of one man only  
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered.  
There is a time for the evening under starlight,  
A time for the evening under lamplight  
(The evening with the photograph album).  
Love is most nearly itself  
When here and now cease to matter.  
Old men ought to be explorers  
Here and there does not matter  
We must be still and still moving

Into another intensity  
For a further union, a deeper communion  
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,  
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters  
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning.

## *The Dry Salvages*

(The Dry Salvages—presumably *les trois sauvages*—is a small group of rocks, with a beacon, off the N E coast of Cape Ann, Massachusetts. *Salvages* is pronounced to rhyme with *assuages*. *Groaner* a whistling buoy.)

### I

I do not know much about gods; but I think that the river  
Is a strong brown god—sullen, untamed and intractable,  
Patient to some degree, at first recognised as a frontier,  
Useful, untrustworthy, as a conveyor of commerce;  
Then only a problem confronting the boulder of bridges.  
The problem once solved, the brown god is almost forgotten  
By the dwellers in cities—ever, however, implacable,  
Keeping his seasons and rages, destroyer, reminder  
Of what men choose to forget. Unhonoured, unpropitiated  
By worshippers of the machine, but waiting, watching and  
waiting.

His rhythm was present in the nursery bedroom,  
In the rank ailanthus of the April dooryard,  
In the smell of grapes on the autumn table,  
And the evening circle in the winter gaslight.

The river is within us, the sea is all about us;  
The sea is the land's edge also, the granite  
Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses  
Its hints of earlier and other creation:  
The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale's backbone;  
The pools where it offers to our curiosity  
The more delicate algae and the sea anemone.  
It tosses up our losses, the torn seine,

The shattered lobsterpot, the broken oar  
And the gear of foreign dead men. The sea has many voices  
Many gods and many voices.

The salt is on the briar rose,  
The fog is in the fir trees.

The sea howl  
And the sea yelp, are different voices  
Often together heard· the whine in the rigging,  
The menace and caress of wave that breaks on water,  
The distant rattle in the granite teeth,  
And the wailing warning from the approaching headland  
Are all sea voices, and the heaving groaner  
Rounded homewards, and the seagull·  
And under the oppression of the silent fog  
The tolling bell  
Measures time not our time, rung by the unhurried  
Ground swell, a time  
Older than the time of chronometers, older  
Than time counted by anxious worried women  
Lying awake, calculating the future,  
Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel  
And piece together the past and the future,  
Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,  
The future futureless, before the morning watch  
When time stops and time is never ending,  
And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,  
Clangs  
The bell.

Where is there an end of it, the soundless wailing,  
 The silent withering of autumn flowers  
 Dropping their petals and remaining motionless;  
 Where is there an end to the drifting wreckage,  
 The prayer of the bone on the beach, the unprayerable  
 Prayer at the calamitous annunciation?

There is no end, but addition. the trailing  
 Consequence of further days and hours,  
 While emotion takes to itself the emotionless  
 Years of living among the breakage  
 Of what was believed in as the most reliable—  
 And therefore the fittest for renunciation.

There is the final addition, the failing  
 Pride or resentment at failing powers,  
 The unattached devotion which might pass for devotionless,  
 In a drifting boat with a slow leakage,  
 The silent listening to the undeniable  
 Clamour of the bell of the last annunciation.

Where is the end of them, the fishermen sailing  
 Into the wind's tail, where the fog cowers?  
 We cannot think of a time that is oceanless  
 Or of an ocean not littered with wastage  
 Or of a future that is not liable  
 Like the past, to have no destination.

We have to think of them as forever bailing,  
 Setting and hauling, while the North East lowers

Over shallow banks unchanging and erosionless  
Or drawing their money, drying sails at dockage;  
Not as making a trip that will be unpayable  
For a haul that will not bear examination.

There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,  
No end to the withering of withered flowers,  
To the movement of pain that is painless and motionless,  
To the drift of the sea and the drifting wreckage,  
The bone's prayer to Death its God. Only the hardly, barely  
    payable  
Prayer of the one Annunciation.

It seems, as one becomes older,  
That the past has another pattern, and ceases to be a mere  
    sequence—  
Or even development: the latter a partial fallacy  
Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution,  
Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning  
    the past.  
The moments of happiness—not the sense of well-being,  
Fruition, fulfilment, security or affection,  
Or even a very good dinner, but the sudden illumination—  
We had the experience but missed the meaning,  
And approach to the meaning restores the experience  
In a different form, beyond any meaning  
We can assign to happiness. I have said before  
That the past experience revived in the meaning  
Is not the experience of one life only  
But of many generations—not forgetting  
Something that is probably quite ineffable:

The backward look behind the assurance  
Of recorded history, the backward half-look  
Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror.  
Now, we come to discover that the moments of agony  
(Whether, or not, due to misunderstanding,  
Having hoped for the wrong things or dreaded the wrong  
things,  
Is not in question) are likewise permanent  
With such permanence as time has. We appreciate this  
better  
In the agony of others, nearly experienced,  
Involving ourselves, than in our own.  
For our own past is covered by the currents of action,  
But the torment of others remains an experience  
Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.  
People change, and smile: but the agony abides.  
Time the destroyer is time the preserver,  
Like the river with its cargo of dead negroes, cows and  
chicken coops,  
The bitter apple and the bite in the apple.  
And the ragged rock in the restless waters,  
Waves wash over it, fogs conceal it;  
On a halcyon day it is merely a monument,  
In navigable weather it is always a seamark  
To lay a course by: but in the sombre season  
Or the sudden fury, is what it always was.

### III

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant—  
Among other things—or one way of putting the same thing:

That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender  
spray  
Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,  
Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never be  
opened.  
And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the  
way back.  
You cannot face it steadily, but this thing is sure,  
That time is no healer. the patient is no longer here.  
When the train starts, and the passengers are settled  
To fruit, periodicals and business letters  
(And those who saw them off have left the platform)  
Their faces relax from grief into relief,  
To the sleepy rhythm of a hundred hours.  
Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past  
Into different lives, or into any future;  
You are not the same people who left that station  
Or who will arrive at any terminus,  
While the narrowing rails slide together behind you;  
And on the deck of the drumming liner  
Watching the furrow that widens behind you,  
You shall not think 'the past is finished'  
Or 'the future is before us'.  
At nightfall, in the rigging and the aerial,  
Is a voice descanting (though not to the ear,  
The murmuring shell of time, and not in any language)  
'Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;  
You are not those who saw the harbour  
Receding, or those who will disembark.  
Here between the hither and the farther shore  
While time is withdrawn, consider the future

And the past with an equal mind.  
At the moment which is not of action or inaction  
You can receive this: "on whatever sphere of being  
The mind of a man may be intent  
At the time of death"—that is the one action  
(And the time of death is every moment)  
Which shall fructify in the lives of others:  
And do not think of the fruit of action.  
Fare forward.

O voyagers, O seamen,  
You who come to port, and you whose bodies  
Will suffer the trial and judgement of the sea,  
Or whatever event, this is your real destination.'  
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna  
On the field of battle.

Not fare well,  
But fare forward, voyagers.

#### IV

Lady, whose shrine stands on the promontory,  
Pray for all those who are in ships, those  
Whose business has to do with fish, and  
Those concerned with every lawful traffic  
And those who conduct them.

Repeat a prayer also on behalf of  
Women who have seen their sons or husbands  
Setting forth, and not returning:  
Figlia del tuo figlio,  
Queen of Heaven.

Also pray for those who were in ships, and  
Ended their voyage on the sand, in the sea's lips  
Or in the dark throat which will not reject them  
Or wherever cannot reach them the sound of the sea bell's  
Perpetual angelus.

V

To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits,  
To report the behaviour of the sea monster,  
Describe the horoscope, haruspicate or scry,  
Observe disease in signatures, evoke  
Biography from the wrinkles of the palm  
And tragedy from fingers; release omens  
By sortilege, or tea leaves, riddle the inevitable  
With playing cards, fiddle with pentagrams  
Or barbituric acids, or dissect  
The recurrent image into pre-conscious terrors—  
To explore the womb, or tomb, or dreams; all these are  
usual

Pastimes and drugs, and features of the press:  
And always will be, some of them especially  
When there is distress of nations and perplexity  
Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road.  
Men's curiosity searches past and future  
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend  
The point of intersection of the timeless  
With time, is an occupation for the saint—  
No occupation either, but something given  
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,  
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.  
For most of us, there is only the unattended

Moment, the moment in and out of time,  
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,  
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning  
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply  
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music  
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,  
Hints followed by guesses, and the rest  
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.  
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarna-  
tion.

Here the impossible union  
Of spheres of existence is actual,  
Here the past and future  
Are conquered, and reconciled,  
Where action were otherwise movement  
Of that which is only moved  
And has in it no source of movement—  
Driven by dæmonic, chthonic  
Powers. And right action is freedom  
From past and future also.  
For most of us, this is the aim  
Never here to be realised;  
Who are only undefeated  
Because we have gone on trying;  
We, content at the last  
If our temporal reversion nourish  
(Not too far from the yew-tree)  
The life of significant soil.

## *Little Gidding*

### I

Midwinter spring is its own season  
Sempiternal though sodden towards sundown,  
Suspended in time, between pole and tropic  
When the short day is brightest, with frost and fire,  
The brief sun flames the ice, on pond and ditches,  
In windless cold that is the heart's heat,  
Reflecting in a watery mirror  
A glare that is blindness in the early afternoon.  
And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,  
Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but pentecostal fire  
In the dark time of the year. Between melting and freezing  
The soul's sap quivers. There is no earth smell  
Or smell of living thing. This is the spring time  
But not in time's covenant. Now the hedgerow  
Is blanched for an hour with transitory blossom  
Of snow, a bloom more sudden  
Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading,  
Not in the scheme of generation.  
Where is the summer, the unimaginable  
Zero summer?

    If you came this way,  
Taking the route you would be likely to take  
From the place you would be likely to come from,  
If you came this way in may time, you would find the hedges  
White again, in May, with voluptuary sweetness.  
It would be the same at the end of the journey,

If you came at night like a broken king,  
If you came by day not knowing what you came for,  
It would be the same, when you leave the rough road  
And turn behind the pig-sty to the dull façade  
And the tombstone. And what you thought you came for  
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled  
If at all. Either you had no purpose  
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment. There are other places  
Which also are the world's end, some at the sea jaws,  
Or over a dark lake, in a desert or a city—  
But this is the nearest, in place and time,  
Now and in England.

If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same: you would have to put off  
Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity  
Or carry report. You are here to kneel  
Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more  
Than an order of words, the conscious occupation  
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying.  
And what the dead had no speech for, when living,  
They can tell you, being dead: the communication  
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the  
living.  
Here, the intersection of the timeless moment  
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.

II

Ash on an old man's sleeve  
 Is all the ash the burnt roses leave.  
 Dust in the air suspended  
 Marks the place where a story ended.  
 Dust inbreathed was a house—  
 The wall, the wainscot and the mouse.  
 The death of hope and despair,  
     This is the death of air.

There are flood and drought  
 Over the eyes and in the mouth,  
 Dead water and dead sand  
 Contending for the upper hand.  
 The parched eviscerate soil  
 Gapes at the vanity of toil,  
 Laughs without mirth.  
     This is the death of earth.

Water and fire succeed  
 The town, the pasture and the weed.  
 Water and fire denude  
 The sacrifice that we denied.  
 Water and fire shall rot  
 The marred foundations we forgot,  
 Of sanctuary and choir.  
     This is the death of water and fire.

In the uncertain hour before the morning  
 Near the ending of interminable night  
 At the recurrent end of the unending

After the dark dove with the flickering tongue  
     Had passed below the horizon of his homing  
     While the dead leaves still rattled on like tin  
 Over the asphalt where no other sound was  
     Between three districts whence the smoke arose  
     I met one walking, loitering and hurried  
 As if blown towards me like the metal leaves  
     Before the urban dawn wind unresisting.  
     And as I fixed upon the down-turned face  
 That pointed scrutiny with which we challenge  
     The first-met stranger in the waning dusk  
     I caught the sudden look of some dead master  
 Whom I had known, forgotten, half recalled  
     Both one and many, in the brown baked features  
     The eyes of a familiar compound ghost  
 Both intimate and unidentifiable  
     So I assumed a double part, and cried  
     And heard another's voice cry. 'What! are *you* here?'  
 Although we were not. I was still the same,  
     Knowing myself yet being someone other—  
     And he a face still forming, yet the words sufficed  
 To compel the recognition they preceded.  
     And so, compliant to the common wind,  
     Too strange to each other for misunderstanding,  
 In concord at this intersection time  
     Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,  
     We trod the pavement in a dead patrol.  
 I said: 'The wonder that I feel is easy,  
     Yet ease is cause of wonder. Therefore speak:  
     I may not comprehend, may not remember.'  
 And he: 'I am not eager to rehearse

My thoughts and theory which you have forgotten.  
These things have served their purpose: let them be.  
So with your own, and pray they be forgiven  
By others, as I pray you to forgive  
Both bad and good. Last season's fruit is eaten  
And the fullfed beast shall kick the empty pail.  
For last year's words belong to last year's language  
And next year's words await another voice.  
But, as the passage now presents no hindrance  
To the spirit unappeased and peregrine  
Between two worlds become much like each other,  
So I find words I never thought to speak  
In streets I never thought I should revisit  
When I left my body on a distant shore.  
Since our concern was speech, and speech impelled us  
To purify the dialect of the tribe  
And urge the mind to aftersight and foresight,  
Let me disclose the gifts reserved for age  
To set a crown upon your lifetime's effort.  
First, the cold friction of expiring sense  
Without enchantment, offering no promise  
But bitter tastelessness of shadow fruit  
As body and soul begin to fall asunder.  
Second, the conscious impotence of rage  
At human folly, and the laceration  
Of laughter at what ceases to amuse.  
And last, the rending pain of re-enactment  
Of all that you have done, and been, the shame  
Of motives late revealed, and the awareness  
Of things ill done and done to others' harm  
Which once you took for exercise of virtue.

Then fools' approval stings, and honour stains.  
From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit  
Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire  
Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.'  
The day was breaking. In the disfigured street  
He left me, with a kind of valediction,  
And faded on the blowing of the horn.

### III

There are three conditions which often look alike  
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:  
Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment  
From self and from things and from persons; and, growing  
    between them, indifference  
Which resembles the others as death resembles life,  
Being between two lives—unflowering, between  
The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory:  
For liberation—not less of love but expanding  
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation  
From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country  
Begins as attachment to our own field of action  
And comes to find that action of little importance  
Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,  
History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,  
The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved  
    them,  
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.

Sin is Behovely, but

All shall be well, and  
All manner of thing shall be well.  
If I think, again, of this place,  
And of people, not wholly commendable,  
Of no immediate kin or kindness,  
But some of peculiar genius,  
All touched by a common genius,  
United in the strife which divided them;  
If I think of a king at nightfall,  
Of three men, and more, on the scaffold  
And a few who died forgotten  
In other places, here and abroad,  
And of one who died blind and quiet,  
Why should we celebrate  
These dead men more than the dying?  
It is not to ring the bell backward  
Nor is it an incantation  
To summon the spectre of a Rose.  
We cannot revive old factions  
We cannot restore old policies  
Or follow an antique drum.  
These men, and those who opposed them  
And those whom they opposed  
Accept the constitution of silence  
And are folded in a single party.  
Whatever we inherit from the fortunate  
We have taken from the defeated  
What they had to leave us—a symbol:  
A symbol perfected in death.  
And all shall be well and  
All manner of thing shall be well

By the purification of the motive  
In the ground of our beseeching.

IV

The dove descending breaks the air  
With flame of incandescent terror  
Of which the tongues declare  
The one discharge from sin and error.  
The only hope, or else despair  
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—  
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment? Love.  
Love is the unfamiliar Name  
Behind the hands that wove  
The intolerable shirt of flame  
Which human power cannot remove.  
We only live, only suspire  
Consumed by either fire or fire.

V

What we call the beginning is often the end  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from. And every phrase  
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home  
Taking its place to support the others,  
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,  
An easy commerce of the old and the new,

The common word exact without vulgarity,  
The formal word precise but not pedantic,  
The complete consort dancing together)  
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,  
Every poem an epitaph. And any action  
Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat  
Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.  
We die with the dying:  
See, they depart, and we go with them.  
We are born with the dead:  
See, they return, and bring us with them.  
The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree  
Are of equal duration. A people without history  
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern  
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails  
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel  
History is now and England.

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.  
Through the unknown, remembered gate  
When the last of earth left to discover  
Is that which was the beginning;  
At the source of the longest river  
The voice of the hidden waterfall  
And the children in the apple-tree

Not known, because not looked for  
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness  
Between two waves of the sea.  
Quick now, here, now, always—  
A condition of complete simplicity  
(Costing not less than everything)  
And all shall be well and  
All manner of thing shall be well  
When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
Into the crowned knot of fire  
And the fire and the rose are one.



# OCCASIONAL VERSES



## *Defense of the Islands*

*Defense of the islands* cannot pretend to be verse, but its date—just after the evacuation from Dunkirk—and occasion have for me a significance which makes me wish to preserve it. McKnight Kauffer was then working for the Ministry of Information. At his request I wrote these lines to accompany an exhibition in New York of photographs illustrating the war effort of Britain. They were subsequently published in *Britannia at War* (the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1941). I now dedicate them to the memory of Edward McKnight Kauffer.

Let these memorials of built stone—music's  
enduring instrument, of many centuries of  
patient cultivation of the earth, of English  
verse

be joined with the memory of this defense of  
the islands

and the memory of those appointed to the grey  
ships—battleship, merchantman, trawler—  
contributing their share to the ages' pavement  
of British bone on the sea floor

and of those who, in man's newest form of gamble  
with death, fight the power of darkness in air  
and fire

and of those who have followed their forebears  
to Flanders and France, those undefeated in de-  
feat, unalterable in triumph, changing nothing  
of their ancestors' ways but the weapons

and those again for whom the paths of glory are  
the lanes and the streets of Britan.

to say, to the past and the future generations  
of our kin and of our speech, that we took up  
our positions, in obedience to instructions.

## *A Note on War Poetry*

*A Note on War Poetry* was written at the request of Miss Storm Jameson, to be included in a book entitled *London Calling* (Harper Brothers, New York, 1942).

Not the expression of collective emotion  
Imperfectly reflected in the daily papers.  
Where is the point at which the merely individual  
Explosion breaks

In the path of an action merely typical  
To create the universal, originate a symbol  
Out of the impact? This is a meeting  
On which we attend

Of forces beyond control by experiment—  
Of Nature and the Spirit. Mostly the individual  
Experience is too large, or too small. Our emotions  
Are only 'incidents'

In the effort to keep day and night together.  
It seems just possible that a poem might happen  
To a very young man: but a poem is not poetry—  
That is a life.

War is not a life: it is a situation,  
One which may neither be ignored nor accepted,  
A problem to be met with ambush and stratagem,  
Enveloped or scattered.

The enduring is not a substitute for the transient,  
Neither one for the other. But the abstract conception  
Of private experience at its greatest intensity  
Becoming universal, which we call 'poetry',  
May be affirmed in verse.

## *To the Indians Who Died in Africa*

*To the Indians Who Died in Africa* was written at the request of Miss Cornelia Sorabji for *Queen Mary's Book for India* (Harrap & Co Ltd, 1943) I dedicate it now to Bonamy Dobree, because he liked it and urged me to preserve it.

A man's destination is his own village,  
His own fire, and his wife's cooking,  
To sit in front of his own door at sunset  
And see his grandson, and his neighbour's grandson  
Playing in the dust together.

Scarred but secure, he has many memories  
Which return at the hour of conversation,  
(The warm or the cool hour, according to the climate)  
Of foreign men, who fought in foreign places,  
Foreign to each other.

A man's destination is not his destiny,  
Every country is home to one man  
And exile to another. Where a man dies bravely  
At one with his destiny, that soil is his.  
Let his village remember.

This was not your land, or ours. but a village in the  
Midlands,  
And one in the Five Rivers, may have the same graveyard.  
Let those who go home tell the same story of you:  
Of action with a common purpose, action  
None the less fruitful if neither you nor we  
Know, until the moment after death,  
What is the fruit of action.



## *To Walter de la Mare*

*To Walter de la Mare* was written for inclusion in *Tribute to Walter de la Mare* (Faber & Faber Ltd, 1948), a book presented to him on his seventy-fifth birthday.

The children who explored the brook and found  
A desert island with a sandy cove  
(A hiding place, but very dangerous ground,

For here the water buffalo may rove,  
The kinkajou, the mangabey, abound  
In the dark jungle of a mango grove,

And shadowy lemurs glide from tree to tree—  
The guardians of some long-lost treasure-trove)  
Recount their exploits at the nursery tea

And when the lamps are lit and curtains drawn  
Demand some poetry, please. Whose shall it be,  
At not quite time for bed? . . .

Or when the lawn  
Is pressed by unseen feet, and ghosts return  
Gently at twilight, gently go at dawn,  
The sad intangible who grieve and yearn;

When the familiar scene is suddenly strange  
Or the well known is what we have yet to learn,  
And two worlds meet, and intersect, and change;

When cats are maddened in the moonlight dance,  
Dogs cower, flitter bats, and owls range  
At witches' sabbath of the maiden aunts;

When the nocturnal traveller can arouse  
No sleeper by his call; or when by chance  
An empty face peers from an empty house;

By whom, and by what means, was this designed?  
The whispered incantation which allows  
Free passage to the phantoms of the mind?

By you, by those deceptive cadences  
Wherewith the common measure is refined;  
By conscious art practised with natural ease;

By the delicate, invisible web you wove—  
The inexplicable mystery of sound.

## *A Dedication to My Wife*

To whom I owe the leaping delight  
That quickens my senses in our wakingtime  
And the rhythm that governs the repose of our sleepingtime,  
    The breathing in unison

Of lovers whose bodies smell of each other  
Who think the same thoughts without need of speech  
And babble the same speech without need of meaning.

No peevish winter wind shall chill  
No sullen tropic sun shall wither  
The roses in the rose-garden which is ours and ours only

But this dedication is for others to read:  
These are private words addressed to you in public.